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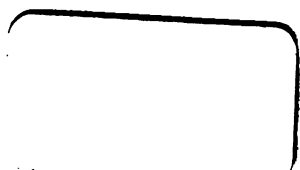
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LETTERS
of an
ACTRESS



LETTERS OF AN ACTRESS



*Letters
of an
Actress*



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NOTE

THE circumstances that prevent the authorship of these *Letters* being admitted are obvious and well-known. They are not peculiar to this book. They are common to its class. The writers of such books must either remain unknown or defer their publication until long after the generation they might interest has disappeared.

The lady who writes as Miss Gladys Luttrell is confident that no one will guess the writer. Some of her friends have pointed out that she has never either on the stage or in private concealed her individuality. Miss Luttrell replied that she was well aware that she could not, like her aunt Miss Gertrude Delafire and other great actresses, assume characters foreign to her own; that all she could do was to be herself, which was what the public wanted her to be; and that if she had not succeeded heretofore in concealing her identity, there was a simple reason—she had not tried. Now she had tried, and looked forward with much pleasure to the attempts that would be made to bell the cat.

Ce que femme veut Dieu veut. These letters then must go forth in what to some of us appears to be an only nominal disguise. That is Miss Luttrell's affair and she takes the risk confidently. But she is fearful that the completeness of her self-effacement may prejudice the authenticity of her letters. At her request one of her friends begs to state formally (1) that Miss Luttrell is an actress and has been on the stage for years; (2) that the people mentioned in the *Letters* do exist, under other names, and (3) that the events narrated did take place.

Of course those are just the statements that would be made if the *Letters* were not genuine—an objection that Miss Luttrell met with the “impayable” exclamation, “But they are genuine. You know they are.” There is, however, something more convincing than even Miss Luttrell's assurance and her friend's knowledge, and that is the *Letters* themselves. A lady who writes about an occupation she does not know is sure to betray her ignorance sooner or later, but she who writes that which she knows is inevitably sincere—in places. It is that occasional sincerity which convinces the reader; and speaking as one who knows Miss Luttrell, I take leave to doubt whether she has entirely concealed her most distinctive quality.

LETTERS OF AN ACTRESS

I

3, Church Row, Ogglesbrigg,

August 8, 188—.

MY DEAREST MAMMA,

I was so glad to have your dear letter. It was all true what they put in the paper about me. The people appelauded me very much indeed, and when the piece was over and I went in front of the curtain they appelauded ever so much, and I heard a lady say, "What a pretty child!" I do wish you were here, so as I could tell you instead of writing—which I can't do fast—and Aunt Gertie says I must write neatly. She has ruled the lines like you used, and she tore up the letter I had begun because it was blotted and not neat. It is good practice for me to write. An actress, Aunt Gertie says, has much correspondence. I am always going to be an actress. The leeder of the orkester said I looked simply lovely going up to heaven between the angels. The angels we got in the town they aren't actresses, and their golden hair is wigs.

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My likeness will be in both the papers on Friday. One will be made from the photo you had took of me last year, but the other is speshilly done by a gentleman who came to the theatre and drew me in Aunt Gertie's room. He called me Miss Luttrell. It sounded so funny. He laughed a great deal while he drew me, and said, "Go on talking, Miss Luttrell—it helps me;" and he laughed when I said the drawing wasn't a bit like me, and said it would come out all right. Alice may have my dolls—all but the big one—and she and Gerald and the others may use my other things. I will lend Nigel my steam fire-engine, if he mends the wheels *so as they'll keep on*. If they're constantly coming off, please take them and the engine away from him and lock them up till I come back. Haven't I written a lot? It has taken me hours, but I perseverd. My love to you and papa and many kisses; kiss baby for me. How is father and the pony? Love to my brothers and sisters; and to Grace Martin, poor dear!

Your loving little daughter,
ETHEL GLADYS HOBSON.

Enclosure.

DEAR CARRIE,

I've had the greatest difficulty to get Gladys to write; yesterday she flatly refused, and to-

day she has thrown down her pen half a dozen times. Of course she's very sweet, but she's very trying, too. I'm glad Tom's got a place; that'll be another off your hands, or nearly so. Has the "Captain" got a purchaser this time? I hope so—you know what I think, and always have thought, of the Foaming Tankard. Business good for Ogglesbrigg. They do come in for Uncle Tom. Constantine has filled next week—P. of W. Batley. Love to the dears and to the Captain,

Yours,

GERTIE.

II

47, Millaker Lane,

Batley,

August 16, 188—.

DEAREST MAMMA,

Isn't my picture beautiful? Everyone in the company says it's just like me. Mr. Boyes, who acts Legree splendidly, said "it was the kid all over, cheek and all"; but Mr. Rogers, the funny low comedian, called it "Bonnie Gladys to the life." I get on very well with the ladies and gentlemen, only Aunt Gertie doesn't let me be with them very much. Aunt Gertie isn't so nice as she was when she stayed at the Tankard. Mr. Eustace Talbot, our manager, said if it was left to him he'd have fifty thousand throwaways from the block and pull the business up. Mr. Constantine wouldn't spend the money, and 'Stace—I call him 'Stace, though aunt doesn't like me to—said "the guv'nor hadn't any idea of his own and wouldn't use other people's." 'Stace is very kind to me; he is a gentleman, and never wears shiny boots. Batley is just like Ogglesbrigg, and the people talk the same, and some of them wear wooden

shoes. I look in the shop-windows for our bills, and see myself like this:

LITTLE EVA LA PETITE GLADYS.

I cut that out of one which 'Stace gave me. He got me starred. If you are a star, people can see you a long way off. I saw those fat letters from the other side of the street. I am getting ex-pert with my pen, and Aunt Gertie says I may write to you as often as I like. I writted this half yesterday and half to-day. How is Gracie and her legs? What a pity they did not make her well at that doctor's. When I get a quicker writer I will write to her. It will cheer her up, as her mother isn't kind to her, and she has no one to talk to all day long. It is awfully jolly—extreemly plesent, I mean—travelling on Sunday. We did the railway company over a fare. All the gentlemen got out of their carriage and left their coats and things on the seats when the man came for the tickets, and when the train started a gentleman got out from under all the coats and things. And they all laughed at the gentleman, who was very hot. One of them told me, and said I wasn't to tell 'Stace; but he found it out, and there was a shindy like what there's sometimes in the Tankard. Nobody was hurt, and they

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didn't have the police. 'Stace is very nice, but he's strict about some things. He and Aunt Gertie are strict. When we travel late, aunt takes me to church in the morning, and she won't let me learn card games. I think Aunt Gertie is like 'Stace. I have told him I am very naughty to her, and he said he wouldn't be my aunt at any price; but I made him say he'd love to be my aunt. If I am not good he's going to put me in small letters. I said I'd never speak to him again if he did, and he said he didn't like me for my conversation but for my sweet nature. Reelly, I love Aunt Gertie, only she never tells me to do what I want to do, and I always want to do what she tells me not to do. 'Stace says I'm a child of wrath. All the ladies and gentlemen think a great deal of my aunt. Mr. Rogers says it's a pity she doesn't go with a better company. She does act beautifully, and the people appleaud her very much. One old gentleman in the audience has been every night, and has sent me a box of sweets each night because I am like his little girl which died. My love to all the children; I did not say they were to *have* my toys—I only *lended* them. Please, Mamma, lock my big doll up. and don't let Nigel burn wood in my engine. He *must* put Best Colza in the large sillender and screw off the top first. I hope Tom likes

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his work in the sitty. Love to my dear Papa
and my darling mother. Isn't this wrote well?
Sometimes I dream of you.

Your loving little girl,

ETHEL GLADYS HOBSON.

III

Grand Theatre, Cronby.

DEAREST GRACE,

Here's a programme and my picture. It is very nice being an actress, and I have many things to tell you, and I really meant to write last week, only I have been ill through it being so hot. Our manager has given me this paper, and I am writing in my aunt's room and want to finish it before she gets back, as I do not wish her to read my private letters. One of the girls who are my angels here said she had never seen a brown-haired Eva before. She has yellow hair and calls it golden, and she is jealous of me. Wasn't it nasty of her? I am so sorry they did not make you well. Mamma will lend you any books of hers, and my father has some by The Druid. They're not poetry, but I remember there was Druids in a book of yours, and you needn't finish them if you don't like. Fancy me being an actress, and you, nearly two years older, having to lay down all day! When I come back I'll stay with you for hours and hours and tell you my adventures. I think we love each other because we both have dark

hair, though mine will never be black—shiny black like yours, and I shouldn't like it to be. I think it looks blacker because you are so white. Yellow-haired girls are beasts. Good-bye, dear. Answer soon. I'm not sure I've spelt Devroox Street right, but I know its 27.

Your faithful friend,

ETHEL GLADYS.

IV

*T. R. Gorton,
Tuesday.*

Oh, my very dearest friend! I got both your letters and could not write for rehearsals. I am rehearsing now, and writing to you in pencil when my scenes aren't on. They think I am copying my part, but I did that quickly yesterday so as to write to you to-day. Boyes says I'm up to some extra devilry or I shouldn't be so quiet. I don't think he's a real gentleman like my papa, but he knows the most thrilling stories, and tells them so as you shrivel with horror as the train wurls through the black country in the night—and the fires do look like the eyes of wild animals. I didn't not mean to be unladylike in not answering your kind letter ere this. It is very hard to be as ladylike as Aunt Gertie wants, and often I feel like chucking it. It must be harder for girls who are not born ladies like me, and I don't want to be common like the angels and the Jenkinses in Devroox Terris. Of all the common things I do think Florrie Jenkins is the—— I had to go through my scene then—never mind Florrie.

Rehearsing is lovely 'cept when Mr. Constantine gets angry—he and Boyes had a row yesterday—and he's not nice when the business is bad. I like to watch them rehearsing; each of them does it different, and I'm learning all their parts. Aunt Gertie is the best. She made me cry the first time by the way she spoke—I can't imitate her like I can the others—and she looks so sweet and fair. She's one of the *good* fair women, and her hair isn't dyed or a wig. And she's not so old as I thought, being only half mamma's sister, and mamma was the eldest of the Delapres. Mr. Rogers told me to watch her. "Your aunt can teach you something if you're not too clever to learn. See how she moves; there's elegance! See how she stands. Listen! I suppose all that speech sounded the same to you. Oh, didn't it? Notice it at night and see how she brings out each shade of feeling. She'll get hold of these Gorton people without their knowing it. And she's with this crowd, playing to this audience! The pity on 't." Mr. Rogers has been in other companies with my aunt, but he never comes to see us. Aunt Gertie's calling me, and I haven't half done.

Friday.

Such a dreadful thing has happened that I could not write to you about my success in

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“East Lynne.” It was last night—the second night—and there was a good house. Aunt Gertie and me were doing our great scene, when a man laughed, and I felt Aunt Gertie’s hand shake, and then she held my hand very tight; and when we came down the stage I saw a man sitting on the arm of one of the pit stalls, at the end on the prompt side. He looked at nobody but Aunt Gertie, and seemed to be watching her. I could not see him well, but I think he was dark and big and handsome. We went on, and suddenly he said, in a loud voice so that everyone could hear: “That’s my wife; isn’t she damned clever?” Aunt Gertie stopped for just a little, and then went on acting, and when the people began to cheer she stopped them with her hand. Her eyes were very bright, and after he had spoke she held herself very straight; but she acted just the same as the first night, though he watched all the time. There was a big round of applause at the end of the act. I saw ’Stace and the theatre manager standing by the man as the curtain went down, and when it went up he was not there. Wasn’t it dreadful for my dear Aunt Gertie? All the ladies and gentlemen were sorry for her, and Mr. Rogers more than anyone. He was waiting for us at the stage door, and he said: “I shall see you home, Amy.” I didn’t know

Aunt Gertie had another name. They did not talk much, and they spoke so quiet I could not hear. Mr. Rogers is taller than Aunt Gertie, but she is taller for a woman than he is for a man. Just before we got to our apartments Mr. 'Stace came up all of a sudden, and took my arm and made me jump. He had come to say that aunt need not go to rehearsal to-day, and he would fetch me. Mr. Rogers was going to speak, but aunt thanked 'Stace, and they went away, Mr. Rogers looking severe like the General in my book. You would not think Mr. Rogers is funny; he is not like the comedians who used to come to the Tankard. Aunt Gertie told me that the man who called out in the theatre was her own husband, and that I was too young to understand what had happened, and I wasn't to talk about it. I said he was a bad man, and I would put him in prison if he was my husband. "Would you put anyone you loved in prison, Ethel?" aunt said, and went to her room. But I shouldn't love any bad people, and if I loved them heaps and heaps, and they spoilt my best scene, I would put them in prison for years and years—I would.

Sunday.

More exciting things! The rehearsal was for the new people and new "business." Mr. Con-

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stantine is very particular about "business"; he makes up a lot of it himself. He says I'm quick in catching what he means. When we'd done, I went round to the front to find 'Stace. He was in the office, which is a dirty little room with a kitchen table and one chair in it. He was writing, and said, "Pray be seated," so I sat on the table and made it jump. He went on writing. It's hard to make 'Stace wild. I got off soon, and looked into a cupboard full of odd things—helmets and epporlets, and hats and shoes, and old pantomime books and programmes and photos—all very dusty, so I put 'Stace's gloves on to keep my hands clean, and when he was ready, he could not find them for ever so long. He had to go to the railway-station at West Gorton about some scenery, and, as he didn't ask me to go, I offered to of my own accord. He said: "All right. You won't give us away. Miss Delapre doesn't dress you up like the theatrical child." Mr. 'Stace always wears quiet things and ordinary boots. Going along we met another manager, a fat man in knickerbockers and a blue waistcoat with black squares on it and brass buttons, and patent leather shoes. He had an Alpine hat, and made me a grand bow, and said: "The infant phenomenon, I suppose, Talbot?" I was glad 'Stace did not introduce me nor have a drink,

though the man said he would take the young lady into the Imperial, where he knew the landlady. Then they talked, the fat man most, and told 'Stace what they had in every night, and he said: "If you don't believe me, there are the figures, and you can ask Wilton." And 'Stace said: "If I don't believe you, I shan't believe Wilton, shall I?" And the other man said: "Well, there are the figures. You can't get away from figures. See you at the Imperial to-night?" He flourished his hat about again, and we went on, and I told 'Stace I was glad he didn't introduce me, and that the man had no business to call me an infant phenomenon. 'Stace laughed, and said: "Never mind; you'll see a lot like him, and he's not a bad sort. H. I. J. K. Boresley—Alphabet Boresley they call him,"

We'd been to the nice office, where they said it'd be all right, and then 'Stace must run about after "Old Jack," which wasn't necessary, as I told him, but he said: "I know all about the office people; I wouldn't trust 'em a yard. I'm going to find 'Old Jack,'" which he did in a truck halfway up the line, and me waiting and sitting on a cask in a deppo, with engines rushing about, which I enjoyed very much and got rested. We were just coming out of the station, when 'Stace stopped and seemed to be going

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back, and then a big dark man came up. It was the man who made the row last night.

"How do you do, Mr. Talbot," he said to 'Stace; "you see I've kept my promise. I'm off to gay Cleughbrow by the 2.14."

"I am delighted to hear it," said 'Stace.

"And surprised? Own 'you're surprised. You were all for giving me in charge last night," he said, smiling and seeming quite friendly. He has a nice smile.

"The next time it shan't be taken out of my hands, I'll take care, and you'll get what you deserve," 'Stace said.

"Oh, you're young and hard-hearted, Mr. Talbot," the man said, laughing. "Remember my dear wife's feelings."

"That's what you trade on, of-course," said 'Stace. "I shouldn't consider them; that would be the best thing for her. Fourteen days would take the bounce out of you, and Miss Delapre could take an engagement in a good company."

"Miss Delapre hasn't had a good engagement for a long while," said the man. "You heard of the Prince's Manchester? A London company, too! Their highnesses and mightinesses were so shocked when I queered my wife's great scene. Their dandy manager was going to prosecute, but Mrs. Coniston preferred to resign."

"We've all heard of you," 'Stace said, "and if you only give me another chance I'll stop it."

"Don't think I will, Talbot—you're dangerous. I must live without my luxury for a little. She won't always be with Constantine or you, either. Now, don't go! I've lots of time," he said, "and I want a little talk with my pretty niece, Miss Gladys Luttrell."

And he turned to me and took hold of my shoulder, and looked into my eyes very hard, though I struggled, and he made me feel strange so that I couldn't speak.

"How do you like your uncle, Gladys?" he said—"Uncle Rupert Coniston. Aunt Gertie must have told you about Uncle Rupert. Isn't he a nice, kind, handsome gentleman? Now fire up like your mother! Dear, sweet Aunt Amy doesn't fire up—much too good to do anything so wicked. How's the gallant Captain and the Foaming Tankard? Poetical name for a Camden Town pub! Look at her, Mr. Talbot; she's pale with anger—*pallidus irâ*, as the classics say. Gladys, you must give me a kiss." And he was going to kiss me when 'Stace pulled him away and threw him hard against the wall, and he looked furious; but in a minute he laughed and said: "All right, Mr. Talbot, you want to quod me for assault, do you? I'm not to be caught that way. But, Mr. Talbot, I

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don't allow people to throw me about, and shan't forget this—by God I won't! Now for gay Cleughbrow.”

He went into the station, and we walked on, and 'Stace smoked a whole cigarette without speaking once. At last he said: “Gladys, you're not to say anything about this to Miss Delapre. You understand that, don't you?” He had no right to speak to me in that way. I said: “Thank you, Mr. Talbot. I know how to behave to my own relatives. I am the daughter of an officer and a gentleman.” And he said: “*Si jeune et déjà Moldo-Wallach!* I apologise, Miss Luttrell. I should have known that your discretion was perfect.” I was glad he apologised, but all the time I was bursting to know about Uncle Rupert. Then I thought 'Stace might be laughing at me; but he looked as serious as a policeman who's had a pint at the side door, and I said: “You've a right to tell me about my uncle Rupert. Do, there's a good old 'Stace!” Whereupon he laughed and said: “There was a young lady who sat a high horse——” So I said: “Shut up, and go on about Uncle Rupert!” And he duly informed me that my uncle, Mr. Rupert Coniston, is a shyun of an ancient family, very well educated at Oxford College, and an awfully clever man. He can act and sing, and play instruments, and

write plays, and do ever so many things, and is most charming, particularly to ladies. But, however, he is not steddly, and led poor Aunt Gertie a terrible life, and now she will have nothing to do with him, and she's had to give up many engagements because Uncle Rupert will come in and make a row. 'Stace doesn't think him as handsome as I do. I keep thinking of him, and dreamed of him, and felt that he was making me like him, though really in myself I didn't like him. It seems to me that dark men and fair women are bad, except Aunt Gertie. 'Stace wrote (writted isn't right) the French down what I've underlined, and I copied it. He is a forrin linguist, having been, we think, in a circus in his youth, where you learn to use language. That's what Mr. Boyes thinks, and he knows a lot. Give my love to Myra Lee and little Pollie, and to Dollie Barker, but not to Cecily, and do not mention my name to the Miller girls, whom I do not wish to know any longer, and you know why. Please write often, and if I don't answer you will know business prevents me.

Your faithful and loving friend,
ETHEL GLADYS HOBSON.

V

Kingsford,

Tuesday, September 18.

MY DEAREST MAMMA,

I am most sorry indeed that you should have had to write to me like you did in your last sweet letter, which gave me as much pain as you. It is truly awful to have such a daughter as me, who ought to be a comfort to you in your troubles, with business going down at the Tankard through Boshers' works closing and papa being stuck with Kaffirs so long. If only you knew how hard I try to be good, only what I truly mean for goodness isn't so thought by others. Sometimes I've thought that, as there's always a bad one in every family, it'd better be me, as I seem that way, and then all the others would be good. But your letter has saved me from despair, and I've switched on to a new line of rails. I feel what you say about the money spent on my education being wasted, and I hate to think I've not got my money's worth. I don't think bad spelling can be unladylike, because I am a lady, and you can't call spelling a natural thing. Most of the words

I spelt wrong I made sure were right, and the more difficult ones which are right I got from the dictionary or Mr. 'Stace, which is frequently in rags or two volumes with one short. I looked for phenomenon in the *f's* (which I still think its right place), but in vain, and, remembering that physic is among the *p's*, I searched there and found it and cut it out. It was an old dictionary, and we needn't go to those apartments again. I do hope, dear mother, you won't tell papa of my unladylike spelling. I couldn't bear him to think that his daughter wasn't a lady, and he such a gentleman. So I am learning twenty words each day (besides what I have by me), and Mr. 'Stace says I shall know all the words in the English language by the time I am forty, if I can keep it up, which remains to be seen.

About the peculiar expressions which you don't like: they are due to precocity, a thing many young people suffer from through no fault of their own, and which is hereditary. It is not true that I am generally detested in the company, but only occasionally, and I did not repeat what I heard Mrs. Ossuldon tell Miss Lovegrove about Mrs. Palmer to make mischief, but because I am a little chatterbox. When I hear interesting things I have such a great desire to tell other people that I cannot resist it.

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A friend of mine says it is a beautiful treat in my character, but wants regulating. Oh, I do wish you were with me! You know I always would tell you everything. I am getting a quick return, and shall talk to you in my letters, which will not make ructions.

Mr. Rogers and Mr. Talbot are my closest friends in the company, and Mr. Boyes, but I am not intimate with Boyes as I am with the others. The other day he said to me, "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child," which made me think he'd heard that I am a trouble to you instead of a blessing. But it's a thousand to one he hadn't, and I am going to be a blessing. I met a Mr. Spettigue who played with you in "Othello" and "Falka," and he said I could thank my lucky stars if I'm ever as pretty as you were, and have such a voice and talent. It was lovely to hear him talk of you, and I told him you were as beautiful as ever, though you'd never got your voice back. He sent his love, and said you'd remember "Pozzie." Business is rather off, and Mr. C. is disappointed. I hope the tour isn't going to end. I can't get anything out of Stace, and have seen very little of him.

Please tell me if any of my expressions are unladylike, and which they are. Since Uncle

Rupert came I haven't troubled Aunt Gertie with my letters. She is better now. Mr. Rogers has not seen us home since we were at Gorton. Aunt would not put him to the trouble. I steadily improve in acting, and my performance both in "East Lynne" and "Uncle Tom" is approved by press and public. Oh, mother! I wish I could kiss you many times, and you would forgive me. My love to my papa and all the children, and that dear baby.

Your loving and sorrowful daughter,

ETHEL GLADYS HOBSON.

VI

Beauchamp, Friday.

DEAREST GRACE,

We are now in a sweet horrible country, as Miss Lovegrove says, where the prolific soil teems with the fruits of the earth, which is what they call the turnips and mangles, to distinguish them from the fruits of the trees, like pears and apples. It is a well-cleaned town, which leaves off suddenly, and then all is country. We go down a lane to the stage-door, and there's a cornfield the other side of the hedge. Our rooms look on to the Wool-pack Inn and the market, and I sit on the window seat, watching the pigs, the sheep, and carters, and farmers, and other country animals, who are awfully funny. I love the horses in the waggons—big, strong, slow things, lovely to stroke. I made friends with a young carter, who let me ride one of his horses to the blacksmith's—quite a long ride—and, with my usual luck, met 'Stace and Mrs. Palmer. 'Stace saw me first, and quickly took Mrs. Palmer into a shop and asked her what she'd have. Fortunately, it was a chemist's, and he only got let in for a box of jujubes and two

magnesiums of sightrate. He looked out of the door as I passed, and frightened my horse, who clattered down the stony hill at a tremendous rate, the young carter hollering at the top of his voice after us. A man stopped the horse at the end of the hill, and said to me: "You sat un well, missie," and then he blew the boy up for letting me ride.

It was just my luck to be rescued by the boy's headman, but I gave him a shilling (which I could but ill spare), and he let the boy lead the horse to the smith, where I thanked him and shook hands, and said I would never forget his kindness. He said: "Oh, yo're welcome, but yo' shudn't 've give Tom a shilling. Tup-pence would have done. Yo' ought to get another ride out of him for that. Come to the Wool-pack about six, and yo' can ride as far as you like." "I'm sorry I can't," I said. "You see, I'm playing at the theatre." "Up Brewers' Yard?" he said—"every night?" "Yes," I said, "and I must be going now." And hardly had I left him when 'Stace turned up all smiles, and told me about Mrs. Palmer at the chemist's, and how he loathed magnesium. We are going to keep this a secret, or it would destroy the good character I have built up with so much trouble lately. I didn't mean this story to take up so much paper, and had more im-

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portant things to tell you, which I'll write at the theatre to-night in pencil in my dressing-room, which leads out of aunt's, and opens on the passage, only that door is screwed up, and I have pinned a card on it with "Miss Luttrell" on it, like the other principals. I must now break off, as there is a dog-fight in the market—a bob-tail and a collie.

Dining-room, T. R.

Same evening.

The bob-tail won. I will now tell you a secret, which no one must know, or it will get in the London papers. We are rehearsing, and shall shortly produce, an entirely new and original domestic melodrama in five acts, entitled "The Little Wanderers." I have a beautiful part—a boy—and am stolen by gipsies, who treat me awfully, one of them (that is Boyes) beats me with a whip because I stand up to him, but I am padded. Aunt Gertie has taught me my part, and Mr. Constantine says I shall be a great success if I can only forget how clever I am. But what do you think? There is another child in it, and it is Mrs. Palmer's little girl Estelle, a white, fat, waxy thing, with hair like barley-sugar in ringlets, and a tiny nose and blue eyes—such a blue! I believe she's older than she says, and her mother's fed her on

gin to keep her little. She is my sister Henriette in the piece, and Pierre (me) protects her. The piece is French, in the time of the Revolution, and I have a lovely boy's dress in the first act, for really I am a Count, and at the end I am an officer.

Would you believe it?—Mrs. Palmer said Estelle would be *La Belle Estelle* in the bills, and “of course, your niece” (she was talking to Aunt Gertie) “would be *La Petite Gladys*, as usual.” “But Gladys is nearly a head taller,” aunt said, “so it would be rather absurd, though it doesn't much matter.” Doesn't matter! I cried nearly all night, and the next morning 'Stace, noticing that I was flying the lily instead of the rose, asked why, and, when I told him, said “Cheer up, my hearty; all will be well in the last act,” which assuaged my grief, and a day or two afterwards Mr. Constantine told aunt that, if she didn't mind, he'd rather I wasn't down as “*La Petite*,” which is old-fashioned and not classy, and of course aunt didn't, so Mrs. Palmer hadn't a leg to stand on when he said the same to her about “*La Belle*”; so we go down in our names, and Miss Gladys Luttrell will show more than Miss Estelle Pole. The author is Clarence Huntingford, a quite new author, who cannot come down to rehearse, so the piece is produced under the personal

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direction of Mr. Constantine. Aunt Gertie will act her part beautifully, but most of the ladies and gentlemen say they have nothing to do. I wonder Mr. Constantine hasn't noticed that. We produce at the Grand, Desborough, on Monday; there for twelve nights. I will write as soon as I can. With love in a hurry,

Yours,

E. G. H.

VII

*Grand Theatre, Desborough,
October 6th.*

Oh, my darling Grace, we have had such a success! Such excitement, such applause and cheering, and everyone called before the curtain, and, last of all, Mr. Constantine (in evening dress), and he made a speech—only a little one, because his feelings were too much for him! And when he said that, if the matter had been left to him, he'd 've been born in Yorkshire, you'd 've thought the roof was coming down! The best of all was my dear aunt Gertie, and in the big scene where she prays not to be parted from her children, I thought it was real, and called out, "They shan't take me away, Aunt Gertie!" The people clapped like anything, so I forgot my words, and Auntie prompted me at once, and further on Estelle dried up, so I went on with my next speech, and the audience never noticed. Mr. Rogers was a kind stone-breaker—like you see them on the roads. 'Stace had sent char-a-bancs to the places near, and charged so little that it was a shame not to have the ride. And all those

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people went back and told the others, so we've been full every night. The second night, when I was down the stage on the prompt side, I heard someone say, "She's not a boy, I tell ye. She rode our young horse down Friar's Hill at Beauchamp only two weeks back, and gave Tom a shilling." It was the young carter, and he was at the stage-door when we went out, and I spoke to him, and then I had to tell Aunt the whole story, and Mr. Boyes, who goes part of our way, told the company, and they say I'm a draw and worth my salary. And Mr. Boyes looks through the curtain every night and counts Miss Luttrell's boys, as he calls them. Business is phenomenal, and to-night is under the patronage of Colonel Bludyer and officers of the Welsh Hussars, who are at Elmchester. I hope they'll come in their uniforms. I am glad you like my letters and keep them to read again. My mother keeps all mine. I hate to think that letters which I have written will be thrown into the dust-bin.

Your loving and faithful friend,

ETHEL GLADYS.

VIII

*Desborough,
Saturday.*

DEAREST GRACE,

The best of being an actress is that there's always something happening. I will begin with the officers. The county families also turned up. Many of their names are household words throughout the Empire, because they spent so much money advertising their jams and cotton and satiny soap. Mr. Boyes said that the fat man in the stage-box was Sir Tunbelly Clumsy, a very old family which is mentioned in old plays. The officers had two boxes made into one. They were all very like one another, and extremely polished, and some of their foreheads were part white and part brown. Miss Lovegrove says it is not from thought, but the way they wear their caps. She says the British officer is the noblest work of man, and one would have married her, but it was his duty to clear off something from the family estate, and he had to marry a countess with money. Duty is their first consideration, but I shouldn't like to be chucked for a countess. They brought

some ladies, who were beautifully dressed, but do not know how to make up. After the third act some of the officers came behind, much to Mr. Rogers' disgust. He said the front of the curtain was the right place for the audience, and wouldn't see them, nor would my aunt. But all the others did, and Mrs. Palmer showed Estelle off disgracefully. You know, after the third act I have to change into a French officer's uniform *made for me*, and have to see that it is all right by the big glass in the green-room. They were all there, but I wasn't going to let them interfere with business, so I walked in and arranged my things as usual at the glass, and one of the officers said something about letting other people look at such a pretty face. I did not like his speaking without being introduced, nor his speaking so as no one else could hear. I took no notice, and just then Mr. Constantine came along with the Colonel, whom he introduced to me, and the Colonel introduced some others, but not the one who had spoken. We had talked a little, when the same man said:

"What's your regiment supposed to be, Miss Luttrell?"

"The regiment of Picardy," I said.

"Never heard of it," he said, sneering.

"I am surprised," I said, bowing, "that an officer of the Welsh Hussars should not remem-

ber the regiment of Picardy." And some of them laughed.

"Why on earth should he?" the officer went on.

"Because, Mr. Ducie," said the Colonel, "we charged the Picardy regiment six times at Fontenoy, and were driven back each time. I am sorry you know so little of the regiment's history." And Mr. Ducie simply squirmed. "I think," the Colonel went on, "Miss Luttrell, you put some of the Picardy spirit on with the Picardy coat."

"I hope, sir," I replied, "that my spirit is the same whatever I have on." And then Mr. Constantine cut in, telling them about Aunt Gertie, and so the conversation became general, and I talked to all the officers except Ducie. They are very nice and rather funny, they only have one voice between them, and all go to the same hairdresser. I had them beautifully over the man behind the coal-cart—a new catch I've got. They asked me whether I was old enough to come to lunch, and I said I was only old enough to eat it, and that my aunt was very particular about the people I knew.

"No chance for us, Conyers," Captain Mella-dew said.

"Oh, isn't there?" Lord Henry replied. "I shall live in hope of meeting Miss Luttrell

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again." And then they had to clear out, and I saw them watching my every movement from the front. I could have told them my father was an officer, but I don't want everyone to know my private affairs. More to come.

E. G. H.

IX

Sunday Afternoon.

DEAREST GRACE,

I found your letter waiting for me. Fancy papa staying such a time talking to you about the Druid's books. I hadn't the remotest idea they were about horses and racing. Papa 'll talk for hours about sport of any kind, and I believe you can read books about anything, though you love poetry best, which I can't stand, except bits of Willie Morris, which makes me feel like going to sleep in the sun. I am glad your mother thought my letter was just the sort of letter a nice girl of my age would write. It took me all my time to write it like that, but now she won't be jealous of you getting letters from me. I wouldn't have her see my letters for worlds, and you are the only one I can write to as if I was talking, for I can't trust people to hold their tongues. I suppose she hasn't asked to see them (my letters) because she's afraid of having a row with you, and of your going to live with your guardian, and her losing the money for your keep.

We went to chapel this morning, and the

clergyman had such a nice voice that, after a little while, I listened to him instead of thinking of other things, which is my usual plan. He made me feel good, and I longed to go to Heaven, and I was sorry when he left off. I am glad he did not call us sheep, which are animals I hate. I told aunt how good I felt, and talked about the sermon on the way home, and she said, "You are only acting being good because you have just heard goodness spoken of. You'd 've acted being wicked if you'd heard wickedness preached. You imitate everything you hear, and see, and feel. It's only mimicry, which isn't real acting." Aunt Gertie hit the nail on the head that time—she usually does. I don't mind her slanging me, because I know she'd go through fire and water for me.

Now I will begin my real letter. We are to be injuncted! I knew before anyone else. After the last call I had been asking Mrs. Lettsom, our wardrobe mistress, about some silk stockings she had promised me, when I saw 'Stace go up the stairs to Mr. C.'s room with two gentlemen—one looked professional and the other had a black bag. The gov'nor's room is over ours, and I could hear them talking and walking about. Just as I'd done dressing, in comes Mrs. Palmer to speak to aunt privately. If any of the ladies have any trouble they always come

to Aunt Gertie. Mrs. Palmer's been married twice, including a widower with children, and, as the three families are in the profession, she has enough to keep her busy. Aunt said, "Gladys, you had better wait for me on the stage," which pleased me, because there's always a chance of seeing someone there, but they'd all gone except Miss Dekker—our old woman who will call me "child" and tell me to be a good girl. When she'd gone I'd nothing to do till I found a sweet kitten, which I put in the branch of a tree, and it miaowed to get down, and at last the silly thing fell on my hat and scooted away under the scenery. I noticed that one of the battens was alight, which isn't Grand Desborough form. I was getting tired of waiting when I saw 'Stace and the two men coming down the stairs, and after them Mr. C. and the local manager, who went straight out. The others stopped while 'Stace went back for a cigarette case they'd forgotten. When he came down the professional-looking man said:

"So it's left at that?"

"Yes," said 'Stace.

"Well, I do wonder at you, Talbot. If it 'd been some men I shouldn't 've been surprised, but not Eustace Talbot."

"My dear Harold Cope, where's your infallible judgment?" 'Stace answered.

"Never mind that," Cope said, taking out a programme. "See here—adapted from the story 'Les Enfants du Chateau,' by M. Alexis Poiteviu. Can you produce that book, Talbot?"

"Of course I can."

"Now and here? I'll give you a sovereign for a copy—for one copy! No? Well, five pounds if you'll *show* me a novel with that title."

"Can't do it, Harold; the book's not here. We'll put it in when the case comes on."

"Three—six months hence, and all that time you're going to trade on the 'Vagabonds.'"

"We don't say anything about 'Vagabonds,' we do use the word 'little,' but you haven't patented the English language yet," said 'Stace.

"All the same, we shall injunct you," Cope said. "So much for 'the children of the castle,' only when you produce that book I'll eat it. Now, as to M. Alexis Poitevin—can you produce him?"

"We shall want an exhumation order."

"Better subpœna the ghost, Talbot," Cope laughed. "Adapted from an unknown work by a dead author! Oh, Talbot, it's too thin! Putting the people into Revolution costume

won't save you. We have you on four distinct and separate scenes—important scenes, too.”

“Common material, Harold.”

“What is the matter with you, 'Stace?” said Cope. “I know you've screwed Constantine up to fight, and to fight Gordon Cardin! You know Gordon—is he the man to let you spoil his piece? You're not the first to have a shy at the 'Vagabonds'—you know how the others came off. Cardin's plenty of money, you know. And yet you bring me down from London when I've four dramas and two operas on tour, and working at three panto's.”

“Always glad to see you, Cope.”

“Hope you'll like seeing a judge in chambers to-morrow,” said Cope. “Going to have supper with me?”

“Yes, I'll come on in a minute or two. What train are you going by? I'll come up with you if I can get the affidavits in time. Shan't be long after you,” said 'Stace, going to his room as the others went out.

Then I appeared.

“What, Kiddie!” he said; “not hiding, Kiddie?”

“Oh, it was so interesting, 'Stace, and I'm so frightened. I don't want to be injuncted, or Aunt Gertie either. What will they do to us?”

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"The penalties are those of *proemunire*," he said.

"Well then, 'Stace," I said indignantly, "you ought to be ashamed of yourself, and you know there's lots of things in our piece like the 'Vagabonds.'"

"Yes, and like fifty other pieces, too. Listen, Gladys; I was chaffing about *proemunire*. Are you sure you know what it is?"

"It sounds awful, 'Stace."

"'Dessay. But you're not to alarm Miss Delapre, Gladys, or scare the crowd with your ready tongue. Injunctions don't affect them. Whisper, *ma petite Gladys*."

"Yes?"

"I've got 'em on toast," he said.

"Buttered?" I asked.

"Buttered and hot," he said.

"Oh, you clever 'Stace! I thought you had a bit to spare. Oh, how lovely! But, 'Stace, don't go up in the same carriage with them. They might chloroform you and take the affidavits out of your pockets."

"So they might, Kiddie. Now farewell, and remember—silence," said 'Stace, kissing my hand like the cavaliers in your books, and disappearing upstairs.

Soon Aunt Gertie came out, and, going home, I remembered I had forgotten to tell 'Stace not

to go to supper with Cope and the lawyer. I am fearfully afraid they will get the secret out of him. He is so easy to manage. I hope he wasn't in earnest about *proemunire*, and I wish I knew what it is. Good-bye. Going to tea at Mrs. Palmer's. I will write the sequel directly it takes place.

Your loving friend,

ETHEL G. HOBSON.

X

Wednesday.

MY DEAREST GRACE,

Through the indiscretion of a barmaid the secret has leaked out. She had heard Cope tell the lawyer that he'd stop the "Wanderers" before Wednesday, and bury Mr. Constantine under the costs. Saturday being market-day, it formed the staple of conversation in the town, and, coupled with the disappearance of 'Stace and Mr. C. by an early train, the worst was feared. I went to the theatre for letters, and one of the ladies told me that a 'script of the "Vagabonds" had been found in the false bottom of Mr. Constantine's portmanteau. Most of the company turned up rather down in the mouth. Mr. C. came back in the afternoon, which made a good impression, but the placards of the evening paper gave us a shock with the scare head-line, "Mystery and Melodrama." It was only something about Salisbury. Aunt Gertie took me to church again yesterday, and, just after we'd acknowledged our sins and were examining one another's clothes, in came Mr. and Mrs. Constantine. They were shown into

seats behind the Mayor by the chief verger, who is the stage-doorkeeper's brother. Mrs. C., with her white wavy hair and black mantle, looked very aristocratic. Mr. C. had on a frock coat, a black tie (in a bow), and a good deal of clean shirt, also gray trousers. They gave to the collection for additional curates, which are scarce. Mr. Boyes and Miss Lovegrove, etc., came to tea, and thought it a good move and likely to restore public confidence. My aunt and Mr. Rogers did not like it, they are so particular! Mr. Boyes says their principles want a private income to keep them up, and you must hold a candle to the devil, though I should have thought he was tired of fire, but use is second nature.

Monday.

Except me, we are suffering from reaction and hope deferred. Also heavy rain, which Miss Lovegrove, who takes a paper, says is chiefly local, and was quite snappy when I said I wished it was local elsewhere. The house went down a bit, and the audience were very dull. Boyes said they were in the come-to-see-the-last-of-you spirit. Many telegrams and another lawyer (Mr. C.'s) came. Mrs. Palmer says Mr. Rogers has a private income. "Then why does he come to Constantine?" I asked, and she said: "Why, indeed?" I am sure she is hiding something

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from me. Not much conversation this evening; everyone borrowing *The Stage*. In the second act the water dripped from the roof on to Mr. Boyes while he was lying down eavesdropping. He couldn't move, and his sufferings made me shriek with laughter; but his language!

Dressing-room, Tuesday.

This afternoon a carriage drove up to our house, and, to my great surprise, out got Mr. Rogers. Up he comes, and says: "Gladys, give my compliments to your aunt, and I shall be honoured if she will go for a drive with me this afternoon." I said Aunt Gertie wasn't very well from neuralgia. He said: "I know all about that. Run along, there's a good girl"; and I told him aunt would be taken unprepared, which he didn't seem to mind. Aunt Gertie said she would be delighted, and I returned to the sitting-room and conversed with Mr. Rogers, and said it was a beautiful day for a drive and that the Sheveley road was the prettiest. I also said I was fond of driving, and he said "Yes—yes, most people are. I hope it won't rain," and got up and walked about the room impatiently, though aunt couldn't possibly 've been ready by then. I said they would have a good two hours' drive, and I would have a cup of tea ready for them. "Very kind of you, Gladys,"

he said; but when I asked the age of the horse, and whether he got the carriage from The George, he wandered from the subject. Aunt came in, and he brightened up, and when she said, "Why aren't you ready, Ethel?" he laughed, and I saw he'd been teasing. I was ready before you could say knife, and, aunt having made me tidy, we sallied forth.

Mr. Rogers enlivened the first part of the drive by a most untruthful description of my anxiety to go with them. I didn't pay any attention, and looked out for people to bow to, but scored only one, the local manager's wife' who returned my bow, evidently not recognising me, only having seen me made up. I won't describe the country, as it's much better done in your books. The air was balmy and did aunt good, and coming back we saw Mr. Constantine hurrying up Main Street with a telegram in his hand. He went into the *Mercury* office before I could bow to him, and, looking back, I saw him come out and go into the printer's next door. I thought there was something up, but at the theatre nothing had been heard. I noticed that Mr. C. was in his Sunday fig and had had his top hat ironed, so I kept a sharp look-out.

The house seemed to fill up during the second act, and many of the men had the pink

special in their hands. I slipped into the prompt-box directly the curtain was down, and, as I expected, the band did not begin. Oh no! Instead of which, Mr. Constantine marched on, hat in hand. He bowed, and got a big round. Then he started his speech by saying that he had a great objection to managerial speech-making. There were, however, occasions when it was not only permissible but incumbent on a man in his position. He would not go into details; let it suffice that certain rumours had been launched and propagated. It was not his to part discuss those rumours, for he was old-fashioned enough to dislike pitch and getting his hand subdued to what it worked in. Those rumours would recoil with axceleryed force on the heads of those who had sown them broadcast. Still, he had a duty to the public, and, if he might venture to say so, to himself. In the words of England's bard, he would say "Who steals my purse steals trash, but he that filches from me my good name!" (*Interruption. Great cheering, and Mr. C. took a telegram carefully from his breast-pocket and went on.*) "I wish to detain you as little as possible from an entertainment which has been so fortunate as to earn the approval of the Desborough public." (*People applaud.*) "I will therefore read a telegram which I have just received from

my manager. It runs thus: 'Application made to-day before Mr. Justice Hopkins in chambers, on behalf of Mr. G. Cardin, for an injunction to restrain you from performing "The Little Wanderer," alleged to be an infringement of his rights in "The Vagabonds." After hearing counsel in support of affidavits, Mr. Justice Hopkins said that he did not feel that the facts alleged justified him in granting an injunction. Application refused. Costs to be costs in action. Best congratulations. Returning by 6.5 express. Hope business good.—Eustace Talbot.' " (*Great applause. Mr. C. beams and bows and begins to retire. False start by orchestra—howled down—return by Constantine—he continued.*) "Ladies and gentleman, I have occupied so much of your time that"—(*the people call out, "Go on!" "Bravo, Constantine!"*)—"that"—(*looking at telegram, and reading*). "Hope business good! Business is good, ladies and gentlemen" (*meaningly*). "Let us hope that this will be good business for all parties." (*People laugh and cheer, and Mr. C. really goes off. I rush to change, but am blocked by Mr. C., who drops a paper from his hat which I pick up. It is in 'Stace's writing, and begins: "Though I have a great objection." It's a speech. I give it him, and hurry to my room.*)

The rest of the evening was a triumph, the audience cheering and clapping anything and everything, and when I disarmed the wicked Marquis someone shouted: "Bravo, Luttrell!" At the end the curtain was raised repeatedly, and the cheers lasted for several minutes. As I came off there was 'Stace in the wings, and I ran to him and said:

"Bravo, 'Stace! you did have 'em on toast!"

"Buttered and hot," he said.

And we both laughed and talked at once, and I told him not to interrupt a lady, and asked him whether writing speeches was an acting-manager's duty, and he said:

"Hang me if I know what isn't an acting-manager's duty! Gladys, have you got a minute? I'll show you something."

So I went to the egg-box they call an office, and there on the table was a bill, with the lion and unicorn, just as they have them for the law courts. It began:

"In the High Court of Justice.

Before Mr. Justice HOPKINS,

CARDIN v. CONSTANTINE.

Application for Injunction."

Then a lot of printing, and in big letters:

“APPLICATION REFUSED.

Vivat Regina! Early Doors, 7.15.

Grand Theatre, Desborough. Every
Night.”

“A thousand of them will be up to-morrow,”
'Stace said, “and two thousand in Royston the
next day. Seen this, *belle* Gladys?” And he
gave me the pink special pointing to a marked
paragraph, headed “Grand Theatre,” saying
Mr. Constantine had won, and referring yewlo-
gistically to the talented *artistes*.

“Your doing, 'Stace?” I said.

“An ill-favoured thing, but mine own,” he
replied.

“Guess you've knocked lumps off Harold
Cope.”

“Well, he did shrink a bit. Now toddle,
girlie; I don't want to get into Miss Delapre's
bad books.”

At the door we met auntie, and she shook
hands with 'Stace and said: “I congratulate
you most heartily, Mr.”—then she paused—
“Mr. Eustace Talbot;” and they both smiled.

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**I am sure they're keeping a secret from me.
My own aunt, too!**

Your loving friend,

ETHEL GLADYS.

P.S.—Here another week.

XI

Wednesday.

MY DEAREST GRACE,

We are having a high old time, the fame of our exploits having gone into all their coasts. "Some of the leading residents of Desborough and its vicinity, deeming the moment an opportune one, and being desirous of testifying their appreciation of James Borton Constantine, Esquire, *quâ* artist, and their esteem of him as a man, have determined to offer him and his troupe of trained *artistes* an unofficial public banquet at The George on Friday evening next." For rest see *Mercury* cutting, which I've gummed on a piece of paper, and the wind has blown in on the cloth and sofa and most of the chairs, which are now shining with stickiness. Notice the line, "this occasion will be graced by the presence of ladies of the town and those of Mr. Constantine's company." It has made Boyes most savage, and he says ladies are not wanted at such affairs. I am going with aunt, and we shall stay as long as the proceedings are decent.

What do you think that silly child Estelle

did to-night? Why, just as the lights went down on the road-scene she got too near the stone-breaker's (Mr. Rogers) brazier and set herself on fire. I tore her skirt off, and the poor little thing shrieked so I carried her to aunt's room, and Mrs. Palmer came in and burst into tears, and made Estelle cry, too. Aunt Gertie quieted them both, and sent for sweet oil for my arm. Aunt Gertie always knows what to do. It's lucky the audience didn't see, or there'd 've been a panic. Estelle was shaky the rest of the performance. I do hope my arm won't be a sight for the banquet, 'cos I want to wear my half-sleeve grenadine. It appears I have found favour in the eyes of Mr. Rogers, not because, as Boyes says, I was plucky—oh, no! According to him (Mr. R.), you ought to risk your life for your worst enemy, who owes you money which he could pay, but won't. I suppose he's right, but I wouldn't advise my enemies to set themselves alight or jump in rivers on the off-chance of my rescuing them. But I couldn't see that little china ornament of an Estelle burn before my eyes, though she can't act any more 'n a woolly dog! You'd never have thought she was so light, and she clung to me ever so. It seems Mr. Rogers is pleased because I kept my head and didn't put on airs. Did he think I was going to crow?

Anyhow, he's sent me three pairs of the most lovely long Suede gloves to hide the place. There's a black and a white pair and a French gray. I don't know which to wear.

Last night duly arrived, and—would you believe it?—my arm was too bad to wear a glove, but I put the other one on. To my surprise, some of the officers (without ladies) of the Welsh Hussars were in a box, and two—Captain Melladew and Lord Henry Conyers—were in mess jackets, which suit slim figures, and I'd told them I wanted to see their uniform. Ducie and another man were in evening dress. I simply hate Ducie; his eyes stick out and the lids hide half of them, and his look makes my blood cold. The other was a new sub. from the militia.

We raced through the piece and saved ten minutes, which allowed us time to dress thoughtfully, though I had precious little to do with a dress high to the throat and my hair down, but sticking out fluffy, I'm glad to say. The only bit of brightness—my Byzantine necklace—I had, Aunt Gertie wouldn't let me wear, and actually she made me kneel down so as she could see whether I had made my eyes up. It is hard to have an aunt who does not believe your word of honour! We drove to the George and were welcomed by a linkman in a red waist-

coat. *There was no carpet on the pavement.* We were ushered into the reception-room and received by the Lady Mayoress, who began praising aunt's acting. Tapping my cheek, she said: "I can't 'reckernise' in this quiet young lady the dashing officer I saw last night!" Good gracious, what did she expect?

The room soon filled, and I must say our crowd and the soldiers held their own among the Desborough magnets, though they were councillors or councillors' wives and daughters. Conversation rather hung fire while they were warming the soup up. A man I was introduced to said: "These are the leading Desborough people—all self-made." "Oh," I said, "I can quite believe that," which he didn't seem to like; but he recovered, and told me that he had seven children—four boys and three girls—so I hoped they were all well, but they weren't, and he told me what was the matter with them. To my great delight someone else spoke to him, and I went to Aunt Gertie, who was with some ladies by the Mayoress, who was doing the amiable. Suddenly she said: "These Bohemian affairs are so pleasant after a long course—this is my eleventh month—of official entertainments. I have Bohemian leanings myself—Shakespeare's Bohemia—that is, the Bohemia which is at the sea-side. So like Shakespeare to make an inland

place have a sea-shore—quite the Shakespearean touch.” “Do you think so?” said Aunt Gertie. “We know that the Bohemia of his day had possessions on the coast, and most likely he knew it.”

Just then the Mayor came in and said: “Supper’s ready: pair off. Go as you please. No ceremony to night;” which put us all at our ease. The Mayor took Mrs. Constantine in, and the proprietor of the *Mercury* took Aunt Gertie. By arrangement with ’Stace, I was between Captain Melladew and Lord Henry Conyers, and opposite us were the medical officer of health’s wife and the daughter of the borough solicitor, and we got on splendidly. I must say they do you well at the George, Desborough, though Captain Melladew wouldn’t let me have more than one glass of champagne for fear of my arm. And the lawyer’s daughter asked what I’d done to it, and I said it was a burn, and then Lord Henry told them all about it in a chaffing way, so I didn’t mind. I told them which were our people, and, while Captain Melladew was looking at Mr. Rogers, Lord Henry and I changed glasses. His was full. There was any amount of things to eat—I’ve marked what I had on the menu. I got off the profession as soon as I could, and we talked of everything you could think of, and Lord Henry

told us funny stories about his aunt, the Dowager Lady Rexborough, who speaks her mind in plain language, and Captain Melladew and Miss Hartley (who are great friends) had a fearful fight on politics, and I enjoyed myself to rights and sometimes looked over at aunt, who smiled most sweetly at me. I don't know whether the Delapres are self-made, but thank Heaven they are different! Then there were speeches, with intervals for refreshment. They weren't up to much till Constantine rose and asked leave to add to the programme, and went on to say that the Wizard of the North had made a most momentous admission at a theatrical dinner in Edinburgh. I thought he was speaking of a conjuror papa knew, but it was Scott, who owned up over his novels. Mr. C. said he had a similar announcement to make, and, after much flowery talk, proposed "the health of the author of 'The Little Wanderers'—Mr. Clement Huntingford, known to all of us as Mr. Eustace Talbot!"

Whereupon, being carried away by my feelings, I shouted "Bravo 'Stace! you might have told me," and that wretch Melladew roared and set the people off, and I went beet-root.

Dear old 'Stace seeing my sufferings got up at once and made a grandly clever speech putting everyone else in the shade. I listened

to every word and was delighted when he told us that the very scenes Cardin had sworn were taken from the "Vagabonds" were exactly the same in the French novel, which is a bad look-out for Harold Cope and Cardin. Then he quoted in English some of the old-fashioned sentimental speeches from the novel, and made us laugh extremely. He was much cheered and applauded, and the Mayor said with such a beginning there was every reason to hope that in time Mr. Talbot would write as great a play as "The Sign of the Cross."

This ended the respectable part of the entertainment, and the ladies retired. 'Stace and Melladew and Lord Henry escorted us to our carriage, and Mr. Ducie must needs come to. I did not notice him, but upbraided 'Stace for keeping the secret from me. He apologised, and hoped our rest would not be broken by strayed revellers, but mine was, and anything funnier than a dispute between Mr. Boyes, full of supper and distempering draughts, and a Yorkshire policeman, under my window, you never heard.

Your loving and tired friend,

ETHEL GLADYS.

XII

Royston, Friday.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

When I get your letters I want to go straight off to you and tell you exactly how much I love you! I am so glad you have better accounts of me, and shall endeavour to deserve a continuance of your approbation, though, with my unrejenerit disposition, it will take me all my time. There is no news except that "The Wanderers" is doing great. We've had a row with Government over some bill Mr. Talbot put up in imitation of the notices of the law courts. They write in a very haughty tone, and take it for granted everyone knows all the Acts of Parliament that ever were passed, and say things that *they know are not true* about our bills and demand immediate discontinuance of "same." Mr. 'Stace has the temper of a seraph, and yet some things make him wild. This time it was the word "same," which I told him was quite correct, as I've often seen it in shop-windows in Camden Town, Whereat he laughed, and wrote a dry letter to Government, saying he would procure a copy of the Act, and see whether it

bore the interpretation which they put on it; by which means we have been able to bill two more towns with the obnoxious double crown (bills), but shall have to withdraw them, 'Stace says, because they make the laws to suit their own ends. Not that 'Stace cares if he can use the bills already printed. I'm sure Cardin and Harold Cope put the Government up to this move. You can tell the children that if they're not good and most obedient I shall put the money I meant for their presents into their saving-boxes instead. It is a great nuisance the birthdays of our family coming so close together. Please give my love to papa. I do hope the railway will take the Tankard, and papa get enough money to get a better house. Love to all, particularly to the dear baby. What lovely names he's got—Cyprian Hamish!

Your loving daughter,

ETHEL GLADYS HOBSON.

XIII

Harden.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

There isn't much to tell, except that we've been photographed, with Constantine in the centre, and me in my rags and officer's uniform. 'Stace is going to get me some cheap, and I'll send you some of each. Also I have started a press-cutting book, which will be a record of my career from the earliest times. We play "East Lynne" or "Uncle Tom" on Saturdays, and, according to your advice, I watch Aunt Gertie in all her scenes, and often talk with her about them. I can imitate her every action and tone. I have learnt a young girl's part in an old play, but can't do it well, not having seen any one of the sort. With love to all,

Your affectionate daughter,

ETHEL GLADYS HOBSON.

XIV

Rendlesham.

MY DEAREST GRACE,

Aren't the photos lovely? I am most delighted that I photograph well, which is a most valuable thing in an actress. Keep the one in rags and send the officer back, as I have to give most of those away. I sent one to Colonel Bludyer (Welsh Hussars), with "Souvenir d'un officier du régiment de Picardie" on it, and he sent me one of the whole mess, inscribed, "To our gallant foe." Ducie, being wickedly fair, comes out badly, I am glad to say. Captain Melladew sent me his likeness with such a nice letter, beginning "Dear Miss Luttrell," and Lord Henry sent his with "A la belle Capitaine" on it, which is bad French, I think. Of course I had to send them each one of mine, with a ladylike letter. I didn't know I hadn't written for so long. The tour ends in December, as we can't get dates worth having till February, through Cardin barring us all he can...

Your loving friend,

ETHEL GLADYS.

XV

Queen's Theatre, Cloughton, Thursday.

DEAR GRACE,

I am so excited I can scarcely write. I've the chance of another engagement. Mrs. Burge, the wife of the manager here, has been watching my scenes every night. To-day she asked me whether I would like to be the "Fairy of the Forest" in the Cloughton pantomime. Oh, wouldn't I! Not that I told her so, but said she'd better speak to Aunt Gertie about it. Aunt Gertie isn't very sweet on the idea. It'll have to be settled by my people. Mrs. Burge wants me very much, and actually offers to let me live with them. Their house is next the theatre. I do hope aunt won't set mamma against the offer. I didn't tell you that ever since I pulled Estelle out of the fire she has got very fond of me, and we are often together. She isn't a bad little thing in her way, and she is someone to talk to, and she'll believe almost anything you like to tell her. I got her to alter some of the business in the road scene, and it was a great improvement, till Mrs. Palmer

noticed it, and went running off to Mr. C. declaring Estelle had nothing to do but watch me act. Mr. C. isn't bad, except when he tries to make public speeches, but he's very particular about altering business, so now everything's as it was before, and the scene doesn't go for nuts. I am not on speaking terms with Mrs. Palmer. 'Stace has booked another town, so perhaps I shan't be home at all. The "Vagabonds" followed us at Royston and did awfully. So glad!

Your loving,

ETHEL GLADYS.

XVI

*Claughton,
January something or other.*

DEAREST GRACE,

I don't know what day it is or what month, the only thing I know is the time for my scenes morning and evening. You've written me six letters, and you've had two cards from me. I do nothing but play, sleep, and eat. I'm on three times during the show, and at the last, when I have some lines to speak, and other times to fill the stage. Mr. and Mrs. Burge are kind in their way. It's all theatre with them, and all the family do something, from Burge himself down to the baby of four (he is "New Year" in the procession). Mrs. Burge lives in the wardrobe; we have no regular meals. Everyone has breakfast at their own time, the table is never cleared and someone's always having dinner.

You should see our party at table some night. Burge smoking and writing letters on his lap, one of the boys in a monkey's skin eating and counting gallery checks, me made up in my fairy dress, and Mrs. Burge mending Maud's

(she's second boy) page's dress on her, and baby walking round the table tasting everything. Music on the other side of the wall. Boys and girls come in and say, "What is there? Hash—hate hash! Ham'll do—give me a cup of korfee. Father, the new stageman's 'blind,' and Joe's fired him." "I say, mother, Lena's made it up with Mollie Paget." "Bad bars this morning, father." "She says they're *not* married." (Shouted) "All *right*, ALL RIGHT! Run away. Ask Craven how many times he's kept the scene waiting." I wish the lady mayor, "with leanings to Bohemianism," could have a week of this.

Aunt Gertie spoilt me for this kind of thing; she would always have things nice and flowers in the room, and carried her own silver—not much, I know, but it made the table look pretty. Here we get Irish stew, fresh herrings, Xmas pudding, all steaming and smelling on the table at once. Mrs. Burge's mother was a boother of the better sort, and Mrs. B. played in the booth when she began. Claughton was their best pitch, and they built a wooden theatre there, and not so long ago made it into the present "imposing and luxurious edifice replete with electricity" and draughts. The first fortnight we played ten pieces a week, and now we've gone down to nine; we give a *matinée* each week

66 LETTERS OF AN ACTRESS

at some place near. Early train; carry your own traps; cold journey in N.E.R.'s carriages; usually rains; rush back to Claughton and dress for show.

And so on, till my head nearly splits. My song didn't go; the music was all wrong; I do a dance instead, and (when I can) I get a lesson before the show, and one of the girls twists my legs for the high kicking. It hurts! I don't see much of the crowd, and what I have seen I don't like. Thank heaven there's only another fortnight of it.

Yours,
E. G. H.

XVII

Q. T., *Claughton*.

DEAR 'STACE,

"Yr esteemed favour of 16th inst. duly to hand, and regret that owing to illness of our Miss Gladys Luttrell *same* could not receive immediate attention. We are, sir, yours ever, Spooks, Josser and Co." That's the business style which I can't keep up still lying on a bed of sickness. I was took sudden after the evening show last Thursday week, at an outside matinée, on a cold, wet day. It seems I scared the lot of them, including the doctor, who said I was capable of having most things, angina pecktoriss (?) for choice. So I was put to bed, where I rehearsed hysterics and kept moaning for something to be given to me. The Burges are awful kind people, but they think that if you want anything it must be something to eat or drink, so I was offered everything you could think of, and many things that 'd never come into your head, all of which I rejected with contumely. At last I was pacified, and, oh! what do you think with? Oh, 'Stace, don't laugh, but I know you will! With a doll, 'Stace! A big

damaged sawdust doll! Oh, I blush to name it, and if ever you say a word to me about it I will never speak to you again! It did me good and made me happy, and I settled down to have my fever quietly.

It was Aunt Gertie who thought of it. They had telegraphed for her, and she came all the way from Devonshire by the first train, though she hasn't much money. I was so happy when I saw her, and wept profusely because they wouldn't let me kiss her. She has nursed me well again, and says I am not a good patient, which isn't flattering, that not being her line. Maud B. says a holy calm fell on the house when Aunt Gertie entered, and now it's as peaceful as an empty cemetery. Also she has performed miracles. They have meals at regular hours, and the table cleared after every one; and Mr. Burge's room, which he hasn't used for ever so long, has been put straight by men from the theatre, and Maud says he looks like a J.P. when he sits there writing at the marquetry secretaire in his frock-coat. They don't have breakfast in their dressing-gowns now, and Maud seemed to infer aunt hadn't one, so I told her pretty quick she had, and a very lovely one, which suits her gold hair, and that she has a five o'clock tea-gown, too. Maud says her people overworked me shamefully, and that I

was very plucky to stand it so long. All right!
I shall know better next time. Got to stop;
tired,—my love, and hope to see you ere long.

Your sincere friend,

GLADYS LUTTRELL.

XVIII

21, *Chastelard Road,*
Camden Town.

DEAR 'STACE,

My grief is too great for words. I had so counted on going back to "The Wanderers," and you've got such a lovely tour! And now my career is broken off! It is simply horrible! All through that wretched illness! You don't know how sorry I am. I lie on the sofa and think over our first tour, and the excitement about the injunction and the banquet at the George, and good old Boyes, and Mr. Rogers and dear little Estelle! I'm glad I made it up with Mrs. Palmer. Don't tell me any more about the girl who is playing my part or I shall hate her. She's wearing my uniform, I suppose? The doctor says I must rest for months, and, having nothing to do, I have taken to growing—always busy, you see. All my dresses are let down, and my arms stick out like rods. My father said the other day that Gladys has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished. He is not really brutal, but will hurt anyone's feelings for the sake of a joke.

My loving family are delighted with the idea, and overflow with suggestions for diminishing Gladys and with illustrations. I send one, "Gladys still growing—lost to sight, to memory dear." The small figure looking up at me is Colonel Ames.

I have one consolation, my friend Grace Martin, the one I told you of. I don't know whether I'd rather be like her or Aunt Gertie. She's devoured with a love of learning, and though, of course, she's finished her education, she still has lessons from dear masters. Mother wanted me to go back to school, which I hated the thought of, and confided it to Grace. She is my only confident. Being of a generous nature, and not liking to keep things to myself, as you know, I tell her everything, and some things I wouldn't tell you. I've told her about you, and she says you're so clever that if you weren't good you'd be a danger to society. So be careful, Mr. 'Stace! Well, Grace, like the sweet creature she is, has arranged for me to share her English and French lessons. Papa has to pay something, which, of course, isn't anything to do with me. I wouldn't go in for German because it spoils the shape of the mouth. I expect there'll be ructions with Mrs. Martin, her mother, who is like a dull fire which suddenly blazes up. She hates me for one or two things

I've said. You know she's a Bohun (pronounced Boon), and she's always telling you they came over with William I., and once I said that my history said the Conqueror's army was made up of the sweepings of Europe. Didn't she blaze! When she was scolding Grace for being a Martin, which isn't her fault, and I said she ought to be glad because "it's a wise father that knows his own child," she simply foamed and asked what I meant, and declared I'd been told to say it. Now she refers to my insolent beauty, and says it will bring me to crime or perhaps to glory. She got that from the stars; she believes in the stars, and when she and Grace have to go to Chancery about Grace's money, she tells the judges about the stars. Grace will have a lot of money, as her mother made a mezzaleance with a millionaire, which she has never recovered from. They live at Camden Town, because Saturn, being in bycycle conjunction, Mayfair was hostile to Grace's spirituality. What's that mean, Mr. 'Stace? All the same, I'm going back to my lessons, and this time I'll stick to them like a starved leech. You know poor Grace's back's queer, and she has to lie down always, and she has to be drawn about the streets in a long perambulator, and can't go to see her friends, so I go to see her as often as I can, and mother thinks she has a good influence

on me, but she never so much as mentions my influence on Grace. Modesty's all very well, but you needn't give your own family away to that degree. It is six-thirty; I should be just getting ready for the theatre. It'll break my heart, I know it will! You must all miss me, I'm sure, and most likely it 'll affect the business, as I'd made such a hit. So glad about Cardin; that French book of yours settled their case—no wonder they won't fight. Ta-ta! Farewell! Adieu! So long, 'Stace! So long, Kiddie! You remember?

Always and sincerely yours,

GLADYS LUTTRELL.

P.S.—Address as above, not to The Foaming Tankard.—G. L.

XIX

MY DEAREST GRACE,

I'm so glad Eastbourne's doing you good. I'm sure you're getting better, and I long to see the day when you'll walk down Gold Street with me, and everyone will notice how lovely you are. I met the Miller girls the other day, and they asked after you and went on to talk about their friends. Have you noticed their way of saying "He's a gentleman;" "Of course Mr. Stevenson's a gentleman;" and so on? I suppose they think people wouldn't see it if they weren't told, or perhaps it's to distinguish the friends from these others! Clare Moffat passed me in Gold Street yesterday, and gave me her coldest and grandest bow. She was astonished at my giving her a sweet smile and an imitation of the Bohun hauteur, just like your mother when she remembers papa has an hotel and forgets that he has held Her Majesty's commission. She was so angry that red patches came into her cheeks. This manner will be useful. Now, don't say this is not nice of me. I treat people as they treat me, and I'm not going to be patronised by a girl whose father's been fined

for diseased bloater-paste, and who says "what-ever." Nor do I care how big a house she lives in, or if she has a new bicycle every week! It's all very well to do unto others as we would they should treat us, and so I do to those who've behaved properly to me. Some day I may be so good that I can do it to those who have not. I haven't got there yet.

Oh yes; I do my daily task of French translation, and I'm utterly sick of "Autour de ma Chambre." All the same, I said I'd do it, and do it I will. Tom's just as troublesome as ever, putting on such airs now they give him more responsible work at the office. He's always talking of the "houses" he's bought or sold, and bothering papa about taking one when the railway pay up. Papa has one in his eye which he's told me of and hasn't said a word to Tom about. It's a high-class hotel in the West End. I won't quarrel with Tom, and don't let him make me wild nor interfere with me. Papa still forbids my going in the bar, and, after what I heard there the last time, I think he's right. It was afternoon and very slack, and the nice barmaid (Ellis) wanted to get some gloves, having an evening off, and mother said I might look on just for the few minutes she'd be away. The barman, Jem, was serving at the other end, so I asked after his wife, and sat down at the

receipt of custom. A man they call Blinder came in with a woman, and Jim served them, and they got quarrelling. Suddenly Blinder said something to her so hideous it made me jump. Jim's own style is a good deal more Kipling than Keble, but it was too much for him, and he was over the counter very smart and cleared the Blinder out most expeditiously. I am trying to forget what he said—no more bar for me! Except for Tom we are a happy family, and that Cyprian Hamish is the most darling boy that ever lived! I read the paper or a bit out of one of the Druid's books to father every afternoon, but now you're away it's very dull, and I miss the stage very much.

Ever and always your

ETHEL.

XX

DEAREST GRACE,

It isn't much dear, but 'twill serve, as Mr. Boyes used to say. There was a time when you couldn't walk twenty yards, let alone a hundred! Your nurse may be as respectable as Deborah, but she's no more head than a jelly-fish. I wish I was with you. I know your step, and you wouldn't tire my arm. Fancy your being able to walk in three years and go about like other people! When I see you walking alone I shall simply dance round you, and collect a crowd, and cheek the policeman, and get took up, and disgrace my family! It won't be for want of change of air that you won't get well. Eastbourne, Brixham, Southwold, in less than six months, and your best friend left without a soul to pour her heart out to! Your mother has lately treated me less like a low-born serf, having found out that our Delapres were noble in the twelfth century. The other Delapres are not the genuine article, so don't be taken in. It seems that Capricorn and Sagittarius have got their evil eyes on me. With a third and anonymous party of an ancient and

distinguished house, they are in triune opposition to me. Maybe Conyers is that same ancient house. They are distinguished, being descended from Charles II. and having covered themselves with glory at Walcheren. I wouldn't have thought it of Lord Henry!

Yesterday I had such a start as I was going in by the private entrance. Someone behind me clapped his hands and called out "Beginners please! Miss Luttrell! Miss Pole!" I turned round crimson, and there was dear old 'Stace! I could have thrown my arms round his neck, but checked my passion, and shook him with both hands and dropped my parasol. He looked at me in open admiration, and said: "Well, well! To be sure! Dear little Girlie! Haven't we grown, and what price Semiramis!" I took him upstairs and called out, "Mother, come and see the preserver of your chi-i-ld!" and those two fell to talking without taking the slightest notice of me, which isn't good manners. 'Stace had lunch with us, and Cyprian quite took to him, and afterwards, mother having to look after the girl and the children, I and 'Stace had a good talk about the company and the piece and business and everything. And my heart bled because I had not been with them, and they all sent sweet messages, and the new girl can't hold a candle to me, 'Stace says. He met Cap-

tain Melladew at Folkestone, and he asked after me, and was afflicted to hear of my illness; but 'Stace didn't give him my town address, as I don't want any of the Welsh Hussars officers at the Tankard. What do you think he told me about dear Aunt Gertie? She gave up her engagement because Uncle Rupert is ill and wrote and asked her to come to him. Constantine begged her not to go; she is such a draw, and he can't get anyone half as good for double the money. Of course it was no good his talking when Aunt Gertie sees a plain duty before her, so she left. 'Stace says Uncle Rupert used to treat aunt shamefully, and I can quite believe it. I saw him, and heard him talk once, and he looked like a man who'd say cruel things to women just to give them pain. And for all her courage, Aunt Gertie feels awfully, more than mother, and she's like the plant that grew in a garden. Poor aunt having to love a man like that! I know she loves him; she always looked so happy when he wrote to her for money. I don't believe women love only the men who are kind, and respectable and attentive to business. Some poor women have to love men like Uncle Rupert. I'm not going to, because I've a head on my shoulders. I'm going to marry a jobber on the House, who will continually make fortunes, and I shall only love the Welsh Hus-

sar officers, and 'Stace, of course, and perhaps other selected lots.

Your photograph is sweet and sweet and sweet, and you look as lovely as the heroines of poetry, who never lived, we know, but are an example to us. I got a frame for it. Little and Seamans had a sale, and there were such smart silver frames at tenpence halfpenny, but I said, "No, I will be classy as it's Grace," and I went to Walkley's the old-fashioned place, and got one in dull green morocco, for which they charged half a crown, and it doesn't show up at all. Good taste, like most goodness, is a fraud; feeling you've done right isn't half as nice as getting what you want. But the frame does suit you, and I am glad you haven't the angry, aristocratic look, but your own clever and delicate features (which wouldn't do at all for the stage). Thanks to your mother, I am losing an Englishwoman's dearest birthright, which is respect for titled people. She says that for centuries our so-called aristocracy have been marrying "shoppies" for their money, all except the Bohuns and the Courtneys, and a few others of the old rock (what old rock? Laurentian, I suppose; your dictionary says that's the oldest), and that the Percies are Smithsons and the Veres are Perkins, and so on, and that there are only half a dozen sound pedegrees (mostly,

Bohuns) in the country. So the B.P. are on the wrong horse as per usual. I borrowed one of your toney books, "John Inglesant," and read it all as a duty, being part of my plan to know what is the best form in everything. I prefer Lytton and Mrs. Henry Wood and Miss Ouida. Also I am pegging away at the English poets and getting the titles and first lines by heart, and particularly the bits that are in Bartlett's quotations. This is duty too. I'm not going to be scored on again as I was when Estelle recited "When I am dead, my dearest," and I thought it was a hymn! The new doctor who's bought Sander's practice, which couldn't have cost him much, as Sanders practised mostly at The Cecil Arms, says Miss Rosetti's morbid, but mother says he knows more about whisky than poetry. And, of course, you and 'Stace both like her, so perhaps it's more Estelle's fault than hers. Papa wants me to read "Post and Paddock" to him now. The Druid has some crack-jaw words (horses names) which father will have me read. He knows all the Latin sentences, though he's never read Virgil or Homer since he left Winchester, and wasn't very studious there. Make the Court of Chancery send you back soon, because I've no one that I love to talk to but you. All love to my dear Grace, from her loving friend, **ETHEL GLADYS.**

XXI

DEAREST GRACE,

My style (didn't know I had one) is naturally variegated, like the streakéd gilly flower. I write just as I feel at the moment and according to the last thing I've read, man being an imitative animal and woman *à fortiori*? (*Lat.*, see appendix to dictionary) more so. I love your way of writing, so quiet and easy, and so much more in it than there seems to be. I thought you were serious about Clara Moffat—please underline the sarcasm in future—but it was perfectly true. You know my Aunt Gertie does strange things, and, though church by birth, goes to chapels sometimes, and has taken me. Now mother lets me go with Daisy Borch to her chapel, where they've got a famous preacher, Mr. Jessey; she says he's the best in London, being bigoted, like all Dissenters. He is very much in earnest, and has a good voice, and mother says he's been taught how to use it (which isn't good form with *us*), and he doesn't throw himself about. He makes you feel that he believes every word he says. He is a sallow, stout man, with long black hair, and scarcely taller than me. He spoke to Daisy one day

when I was with her, and when she introduced me he looked at me like Uncle Rupert did, only in a good way, and didn't talk religion. I rather liked him, but, of course, should never be a Dissenter, as they hate the trade and the profession.

Dear, I must leave off. There's such dreadful news—a telegram from aunt saying Uncle Rupert's dead! Mother went to her by the next train. When she read the telegram she called father and said: "I must go to Gertrude. She mustn't be by herself You know how she loved him, Jack;" and she looked like Aunt Gertie, and her voice sounded the same, and she never calls father Jack. And she spoke to me as if I was grown up, and said I was to look after the house and the children and be good. Fancy mother leaving the children! Father gave her a lot of money, and said: "Bring her back, Carrie. She won't be reminded of him here. I wish to God none of you'd ever seen him." "Don't, Jack," mother said, looking quite strange and fearful; "that's all over. You promised—— Don't men ever forgive?" Father drummed on the table with his big strong hand for a minute, and I've never seen him look so serious. He got up and kissed mother, and she went to pack, but what it all means I don't know, because it's Aunt Gertie, and not mother,

who was in love with Uncle Rupert. And when mother came back and father told her not to hurry, and said, "I've sent for Mrs. Vere, Carrie, about your mourning," she looked so grateful, and held his hand and said something in a low voice which I didn't hear. Nothing was said about the family mourning. Won't people think it strange none of the family being in black, particularly the eldest daughter? Mother told me heaps about what to do for the children, and not lose my temper with them, which I never do, except they don't do what they're told. I've got her room and Cyprian's bed next mine, and he cried in the night, and I had to walk about and hush him to sleep, and he went off with his hand clutching my hair, and I was afraid to take it out, and in the morning he was still holding it.

I've only had one row with the girl, but I've been so busy I couldn't send this sooner. Father says I manage beautifully, and told me that he'd settled with the railway and been offered of a high-class private hotel (with very little bar business) convenient for the May meetings (they are not races) and the theatres, and he's not told anyone but mother. Tom made a great fuss about his breakfast being ready, and it was ready and always will be. I don't see much of him, and I don't like his city friends.

The day of the funeral father came up to me and said: "Here's Mrs. Harper, Ethel. You must see her; say I'm out on business." He doesn't like her much, nor does mother, but keeps up with her because they began the profession together. In she came and kissed me, and said: "Well, Gladys, and how's your poor dear mother? Laying down, I suppose. Tell her I'm here; she'll see me, of course." She was awfully surprised mother had left me in charge, and seemed to think I should get playing with matches.

"Your mother 'll feel this terribly," she said.

I said: "Oh, she does, Mrs. Harper; she is so sorry for dear Aunt Gertie!"

She said, "Oh yes, her own sister," and stared at the "Relief of Lucknow" over the chimney-piece. She waited for father (in vain), so I asked her to have tea, and made it myself; and she told me mother knew Uncle Rupert first, while she was still on the stage when Tom and I were born. He was in the same company with her, and met Aunt Gertie when they had "The Harrington" on the south side. "Miss Gertrude Delapre didn't know him for two or three years after your mother, though he was always at their house and a great friend of the Captain's." I knew that wasn't true, and I didn't like the way she talked of mother. I think she

was going to say more—she's an awful gossip—but she thought better of it, though she did tell me that Aunt Gertie had a little boy that died. She knew a lot about Uncle Rupert which was very interesting. He was a great success in London some years ago, and, being a gentleman and awfully clever and well educated and charming in society, he got to be a great favourite on and off and much talked about. Having thoroughly aroused my curiosity, Mrs. Harper said, "But that's all dead and buried. Least said, soonest mended, you know," and left, after staying an hour and a half.

Mother and Aunt Gertie came the next day. Aunt's fair hair looks lovely against her black. Mother says I've managed very cleverly, but when father told the children Ethel wouldn't be looking after them any more, they weren't at all sorry, and that ungrateful Gerard called out, "I like my own mother best," and that after I'd let him have hot toast to his tea! I do hope you'll stay some time at home before going abroad; we shan't see much of one another, I think, when you come back and have to live in Belgravia, but you will always find me your loving and devoted friend,

ETHEL GLADYS HOBSON.

P.S.—Aunt Gertie's not going back to Constantine, but with a Shakespearean company on tour, and they're coming to London, and I'm going to see her as Rosalind and Portia; and Mr. Rogers is in the company, and mother said, "You've got the only Touchstone in the profession," but I said that Mrs. Martin had seen Quentin, the manager of the St. George's, play Touchstone lately, and thought him very gentlemanlike, which, she said, he'd probably caught from the titled people he knows. Mother said he could no more play Touchstone than Hamlet, and aunt said he was very clever in sketches, and laughed when I asked whether he was going in the halls. And mother asked me a question, "What is a manager?" and the answer is, "A man whose business ability enables him to give himself parts no one else would give him," which does show he's sharper than the others. Aunt Gertie's new manager has much improved Shakespeare, and arranged the play differently, because a great deal of water has passed under the bridge since Shakespeare lived, and the managers know how he ought to have written his plays, which is lucky for the public, isn't it?

E. G. H.

XXII

DEAREST GRACE,

You ought to be a fixture instead of oscillating about like a planet that's lost its way. Just as I've got used to seeing you every day the doctors find a new place to send you to. Your departure in a cab without a number, and with your maid and courier, is still the talk of Camden Town. Your mother's demeanour—affable to the cabman, haughty to the servants, and condescending to the ladies of the neighbourhood—has given great offence, but has increased her reputation as a sorceress. Her last words, "Remember Capricorn and Sagittarius," were taken as a double event tip for the autumn handicaps, and as the Bowman won yesterday everyone is searching the acceptances for something that may be Capricorn in the Cambridgeshire. I fancy it's Scapegoat, but Father's put a little on Tragedy at a long price, though it's an uncertain starter. I do hope you'll enjoy the genealogical tour your mother's mapped out. Europe seems littered with your ancestors.

We've been so busy getting Glover's Private Hotel ready that I haven't felt so miserable as

I usually do when you leave me. I am so glad you liked the look of it, and the situation in Nightingale Place near the clubs, and ten minutes from everything, sacred and profane. Everything's straight now, and papa took it over a month ago, and most of our furniture's gone in, and we leave the Tankard in a few days. Papa's been working both houses for weeks, and has had to rest on the sofa the last two or three days and have the doctor, who has kept him in bed to-day. I am going to read to him, after making some P.P.C. calls, and must now break off to help mother with the packing.

* * * * *

It's five days since I wrote the first part of this letter. Now father's dead! The funeral was yesterday. I had been reading the paper to him, and he got tired of it and said he'd rather have some of "The Druid," so I read some of "Silk and Scarlet," and I was just reading, "'Well, I'll beat you, Tim, with the chestnut to-day,' Fobert said," when father tried to call out and struggled, trying to breathe. Oh, it was hard to see him like that! His face was dark and wet with sweat. I gave him the medicine, and he held my hand because he wanted me with him. I had to lean close to him to hear

what he said, and he called me Gladdie, as he used to when I was little. "Gladdie, you'll be good to your mother," he said; "I want to hear you say it;" and when I'd said it he stroked my face and said, "You took after me, Ethel." And I was afraid of his look, and slid my hand from his and fetched mother. He smiled at her, and I saw his lips say, "Carrie," and she put her arms round him, and I went out of the room softly, and I cried. Jem got the doctor, who gave father some medicine. Then we waited, and after a long time the doctor spoke to mother, and she brought the children in and father kissed them. I think he knew them, because when I kissed him he said, "Glad——"

I was sitting by the fire, so as not to see father in pain, when suddenly mother cried out, and I ran to her, and she fell crying and sobbing in my arms. She was very bad all night, and kept saying she had always been true to him. When she slept I went back to father's room, which was all dark, except for a little light from the fire, and I put both my hands in one of his, as I used to, and could never get them out unless he liked, because he was so strong. I wondered whether he'd been happy; I thought he had: he was so fond of mother and us children. I thought of his plan of selling Glover's, if it turned out well, and buying a country

place near his friend Mr. Weston, the trainer. "You'd look well on a horse, Ethel," he had said.

I heard a half-shriek, and I saw a strange, poor woman looking at me. I had forgotten that it was daylight. She said, "I beg your pardon, miss, I'm Mrs. Spence," and as I didn't answer she went on: "They shouldn't 've let you watch alone. Aren't you frightened?" I said, "No; frightened of what?" "We all have our own ways of taking it, of course," she said. "Go back to your mother, dear; she wants you." I must have been a long time away from mother, so I went, and the woman locked the door after me. Mother was very bad all that day, but she roused herself and recovered wonderfully.

We've had a great deal to do, and I've had to see a good many people, who are kind, but they say the same things. I never think father alive—I know he's dead—except when I dream of him and hear his voice so plain and see the smoke from his cigar! Aunt Gertie couldn't come to us; they're rehearsing "The Merchant." She wrote to me. I wish she was here. She says father gave up "his class" to marry mother; his people never forgave him, and were very angry when he accepted uncle William's offer and went to the Harrington. As we came

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from the grave a tall, elderly gentleman raised his hat to mother, and she said it was father's eldest brother, Mr. Augustus Hobson. He is high up in some Government office. He is gentlemanly, and has thin lips, and looks as if he couldn't feel. Mother said I'd been strange, and that I must rouse myself, and that I was to see the doctor. I saw him, and told him there was nothing the matter with me. I don't like him! he's so conceited. He said I must occupy my mind, and not think so much. I've been pretty well occupied, and I shall help mother all I can, and I want to be left alone. We are very busy; we go to Glover's the day after to-morrow. Jem's just come in about the furniture that's going away. He is very proud of the number of people who were at the cemetery. He is coming to the new place with us. I like Jem; he was very fond of "the Captain," as he calls father.

I had seen to the things and had written some letters, and was looking for something to do, when Jem came with a card and said mother couldn't see the gentleman who asked, "Wasn't there a young lady?" and said: "Tell her I'm from the Arbour Road Chapel. She may like to see me." It was Mr. Alfred Jessey. I thought it kind of him to come, and went down and saw him in father's room. He is not a

young man, nor handsome, and I suppose he wouldn't be called a gentleman. He asked after mother and whether he could be any use, and hoped I wouldn't mind his coming, though he's not our clergyman. He knew a great deal about father, and spoke nicely about him. He said that he'd had trouble himself and had seen others in affliction, and had learnt that sympathy helps us to bear sorrow. And, Grace, he told me about his wife, for whom he had waited years because they were both poor. She died after they had been married a very little while. I told you what a wonderful voice he has; it seems to change of itself according to his feeling. He stayed a long time, and I talked to him as I would to you, and didn't mind crying before him. I wasn't so unhappy after he had left, and I slept all the night without dreaming of my dear father. Good-bye, Grace; write to me soon. You will do me good. When we get settled at Glover's I shall come up to Arbour Road Chapel sometimes.

Your loving friend,

ETHEL.

XXIII

Glover's.

MY OWN GRACE,

Many and many thanks for your letters, and for writing again in spite of my not answering. They think I am very dull, but it's only a month since the funeral. Please thank your mother for her message. Sometimes, perhaps, I've said things to her that I oughtn't. She'll know they weren't meant. It's because my feelings run into words so quickly which makes me different from other people. Do you think, dear, that they don't feel, or can't express? We are settled here and fairly busy. All the property has been left in trust for mother and the family. Tom is very angry about it, and hasn't behaved well. Mother gives way to him a great deal. Mr. Weston, the trainer, is one of the trustees. He is a little man, with big shoulders and thin legs and sharp little blue eyes. Papa said he was a rare good sort, and a real straight un. Mr. M'Dowell, the other trustee, comes from the North of Ireland, and has a Habsburg lip. I was with mother when they were talking business, and Mr. M'Dowell said: "Well, young

lady, you're big enough to be getting your own living, instead of being a burden on your mother." I told him I was going back to the profession very soon. After Xmas my singing and dancing lessons begin. I went to hear Mr. Jessey, and saw him after the service, and thought he ought to know I was on the stage. He did know it, and knew Shakespeare, too. The chapel was packed, and he preached thirty-five minutes, and no one went out. Please give my kind regards to your mother. Love to you, dear; so glad you're still strong.

Your loving friend,

ETHEL.

XXIV

Glover's, Xmas Eve.

MY DEAREST,

What a lovely present! Sea-otter, the most expensive of furs. But, Grace dear, I'm much too young: I shall have to grow up to it, which delights mother. You know how she loves to put things by and keep them for best. The children are so happy with your huge box of French toys, and the staff and our lady cashier, Miss Lloyd, have admired them very much. Mr. Dykes, the head waiter, who holds the French in abhorrence, has actually said they are an ingenuous nation! I dreaded Xmas coming, and so did mother. You know why. I have made a friend of one of Glover's most faithful patrons, a Miss Adelaide Newsome, a rich old lady who lives on her own property in Berkshire, and comes to London (to us) twice a year. She was sitting in her room with the door open as I went up, and a long while afterwards, when I came down, she was sitting there just the same, with her hands crossed on her lap. She saw me, and asked me to be so good as to beg Mr. Dykes to come to her (Dykes attends all the old

customers). Seeing the evening paper there, and thinking she had read it, I asked whether she would like a book to read. "I have books, thank you," she said; "but I can't read them. I am nearly blind." Fancy the poor old thing sitting there all alone, and not able to work or read! So, without thinking, I offered to read to her. At first it seemed as if I had taken a liberty, for she said her maid read to her. I was going, when she asked whether my reading voice was pleasant. "My maid's voice is as harsh as a crow's," she said, "and I am singularly sensitive to sounds." I told her that I used to read to father, and that the Delapres' voice was famous in the profession. "I saw a Miss Delapre enact Rosalind at Newbury recently," she said; "she spoke the blank verse with great justness and more sense of *nuance* than is usual with modern comedians. I thought her voice remarkably pure and melodious." "Why, that's Aunt Gertie!" I cried out, forgetting manners. "You should hear her read Milton!" That was rather a shock to her, but she got over it before long and accepted my proffered aid, *if* she would not interfere with my duties, *if* she would not encroach on my leasure, and *if* my mother granted her permission! I told her that I hadn't any duties, not being in the business, but that I wrote letters for mother, and sometimes took

Miss Lloyd's place in the office for a little. My leasure, I said, was at her service. All the time she stared at me as if I was the darling *crypto-procta ferox* at the Zoo. Then a formal message, as long as from here to the Mother Redcap, was sent via Dykes to mother, who was graciously pleased to consent. Whereupon Miss Adelaide Newsome informed me that she would be glad to avail herself of my kindness at a quarter before six o'clock.

I returned at that time, and was given "Sermons" by Newman. It isn't at all bad. After I had read one Miss Newsome stopped me and said: "You read well for a modern young lady, but you read too quickly, and you're inclined to slur the longer words." (Just what aunt said!) "Your voice is not matured nor fully controlled, but it is sweet and of good *timbre!*" (This comes of pitying people!) "May I ask how much you have understood of what you have just read?"

I said I hadn't understood quite all.

"Why, then," she replied, "did you not ask me to explain it to you?"

"Oh, madam," I said, "I was reading for your pleasure, not for my own instruction."

"That is true," she said. "A judicious response. Perhaps, Miss Gladys, it will also give

me pleasure to explain what you do not understand in Cardinal Newman's sermon."

I was with her for an hour and a half, and she was much brighter when I left. I read to her every day afterwards, all the time she was here. She is old-fashioned and formal, but she's read even more than you have, and she's very plain-spoken and matter-of-fact and unsentimental. She bade me good-bye in a long speech that I interrupted twice, thinking it must be over. In March she comes again. With love,

Your loving, faithful friend,

ETHEL.

XXV

Glover's, February 18.

DEAR 'STACE,

You are a very good agent to get me an offer so soon, and I will pay you in esteem and respect, which are rarer than fine gold and cheaper. Mother wants me to get into a repertoire company where the other ladies are sickly, so as I shall get practice sooner; and, moreover, my singing mistress wants me to go on with my lessons, as my voice is stronger. It is a soprano of the mezzo sort, which requires more artistic expression than the ordinary kind. 'Stace, you should see me dance! With singing, dancing, my natural dramatic talent and my amiable disposition, I ought to get on pretty quickly. You know I don't care about business, and I won't be ordered about by Tom; and, then, there's such a lot of us, and interest to pay on the mortgage, that it's my duty to help all I can. So please, dear Mr. Eustace Talbot, forgive me for not taking Robberd's offer (what a salary!), and get me something nice for August Bank Holiday. I want to tell you what happened here the other day, as you know the

party, only it's a great secret, and you mustn't tell a soul. I rely on your discretion. Enclosed please find scene plot. (*Door L. of landing leads to our apartments; on R. is staircase leading to visitors' drawing-rooms. The mirror on the wall of the landing faces people coming up, and can be seen from our door L. (Sure you've got it?) Enter L. MISS GLADYS LUTTRELL; sees reflections in mirror; withdraws quickly and with characteristic grace. Reflections ascend, talking. G. L. recognises voice. Reflections disappear in No. 7. ('Stace, one of the reflections was Captain Ducie; the other a lady!)* Enter G. L. *Business. Descends swiftly. Enters office.*)

SCENE.

MISS GLADYS LUTTRELL. MISS LLOYD (*in walking costume*).

G. L. Am I late? Sorry. Been detained.

L. Oh, don't mention it. So kind of you to take my place. (*Whispered*) I did want to go so much. His letter's upset me. George is that touchy; not so much touchy as sensitive. He feels things. Of course, when I said his cousin Alfred was a Radical, and that Radicals were the lowest of the low, I didn't *mean* anything. It was only something to say, you know.

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And, then, for him to put that cutting about Sir George Grey in his letter, and write "Another Radical" on it! I call it uncalled for and most gratuitous.

G. L. Perhaps he's jealous.

L. Then I call it very unfeeling, and after I've been in some of the best private bars in London, and never went out with anyone. But he isn't one to joke. I do wish I hadn't said that, particularly after the words we had about his giving all the bread to the swans and not to the ducks, as I wanted him to.

G. L. Don't you let him see you're upset, Miss Lloyd. Got the duck's food?

L. Yes, there's the bag. Not let him see! Why, Miss Gladys, he knows my every thought. Tells in a minute—it's really wonderful; and I'm the same about him. He says we're complimentary natures, which means, you know——

G. L. Any thing to do with the stars?

L. Something of that sort—you're meant for each other, and no one else. I know it's true. When I saw him first at——Oh, it is late, and George hates waiting! That parcel's for number eleven; sixteen can't have front row at the Princes'—third's the best. They'll call for an answer to Mrs. Milner's letter; and number eight's bill's made out. Where's the bag? I do

hope he won't be there first. Good-bye, Miss Gladys.

[Exit flurried.]

How do you like my dialogue? Well, the first thing I did was to look up the people in No. 7. They were Mr. and Mrs. Langdon. I didn't understand that till I thought perhaps he'd come into money, and had to take the name. Or he might have eloped with the lady; she is very pretty and rather young—about thirty, I should say—and dressed in exquisite taste; or they might bemorganatically married. I don't quite understand that sort of marriage. Please explain in your next. To resume. There wasn't much to do in the office, so I went on looking out the French words I didn't know in "François le Chiampi," which is heart-breaking work, but shows you're strong-willed. Suddenly a voice said, "Any letters for Mrs. Langdon?" and there was Ducie, life-size. "You here, Miss Luttrell?" he said in his raspy voice, looking, for some reason or other, rather annoyed.

"Yes, it's me, Captain Ducie," I said. "May I congratulate you on your step; I saw it in the Army News."

"Thanks. By-the-bye, Miss Luttrell, don't call me Ducie. I'm here incog. Family business. You understand?"

"Not quite," I said, "but, of course, I shall do as you wish."

"I'm glad you've learnt to hold your tongue," he said. "I heard you were a bit of a chatter-box."

"I'm older now," I said. "How pretty Mrs. Langdon is! Are you going to introduce me? I won't say any thing about your being Captain Ducie."

"I should be delighted, but we have to leave to-night unexpectedly," he said. "Glad you think so well of Mrs. Langdon. Would you know her again?"

"Oh, I'd swear to her anywhere!" I said.

"Would you, indeed? Observant child! I don't think it will be necessary; we're not going to appear at the Old Bailey. Will you have my bill sent up? I suppose you've cut the stage, Miss Luttrell?"

Of course I told him I hadn't, and about dear father and our coming to Glover's, and Aunt Gertie losing her husband, and everything. He told me that Colonel Bludyer was a Major-General, and that the new Colonel—Luscombe—was much nicer. He ordered a cab to be ready in a quarter of an hour, and the lady went away in it; but she had such a thick veil on it was impossible to see her features. Ducie didn't

come down with her, which struck me as odd. Miss Lloyd came in soon after and was much surprised at No. 7 going so soon; they came only last night, and meant to stay two or three days. Ducie paid Dykes and went off in a four-wheeler with all the luggage without saying good-bye. Miss Lloyd was too much taken up with her George to talk over this mystery. She's keeping something from me, I'm sure. It seems George was joking, and it's all right now, and Miss Lloyd was so happy that she looked pretty. I shouldn't 've thought feeding the ducks in St. James's Park with your sweetheart was so exciting.

Write soon; I'm dying to hear your explanation of the Ducie mystery. Remember me to all Constantine's crowd. So glad you think Estelle will be "beautiful in the strict sense of the word"; pity she isn't travelling with you. She *may* marry an aristocrat, but my tip's an acting-manager. I suppose she's the *ingénue* heroine of the comedy you're writing, which has my best wishes. Aunt Gertie's playing legit. with Mander's Co. They'll be at North Shields when you're there, and I am afraid they will spoil your business. You're to call on Aunt Gertie, and write me afterwards all she says and how she is. Please tell Mr. Boyes I often think of

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him. Is your comedy going to be called
"Miserably Beautiful Estelle?"

Yours sincerely,

E. G. HOMER.

E. TALBOT, Esq.

XXVI

MEMORANDUM.

From

MISS GLADYS LUTTRELL,
Nightingale Place,
London, W.

To

EUSTACE TALBOT, Esq.,
Acting-Manager of
"Gone to the Bad" Co.,
Melodramatist and author
of half a comedy.

Resuming tenor of last commn., kindly note as follows: Captain Robert Santon Melladew of the 104th (Welsh) Hussars called here the day after Ducie left. He was awfully nice, just the same as ever. I like loyal and faithful people. He is senior Captain now, and will be a Major in course of nature. He was most delighted to see me, and *didn't* say I had *improved*, but that I was only nicer than before, because there was more of me to be nice. You may have that line to describe your wonderful heroine! Captain Melladew adjured me not to breathe a word about Ducie and the lady who came here. It's most important no one should know. Melladew couldn't tell me why, as he doesn't inquire into people's private affairs. But he did say the lady was related to Ducie, so I suppose they came here to talk business. He

saw mother, and said that the whole mess of the Welsh Hussars would stay at Glover's, and must needs laugh when I said he was to ask them to bring their relations too. Melladew is nicer than Ducie, though his family's not as good, being in trade as bankers. Ducie is related to the Glastonbury family and might be "a" Earl. The W. Hussars are at Canterbury, and the officers often have to come to W. O., which is, so to speak, round the corner, and they will look in here, which will be good for business. Flat-headed, am I not? My friend Grace's mother is right about the stars. You remember what she said about *Capricorn*. Would you believe it, the crest of the Welsh Hussars is "a goat or, *battant* regardless." Evidently this means something—Ducie or another! And—listen, 'Stace! Estelle=stella=a star. Don't you deride the planets again!

E. G. H.

P.S.—*Flat*-headed should be *level*-headed.

P.P.S.—I knew you before E. did. Don't hurry to write.

XXVII

*C/o Miss Newsome,
Chepe, Stedding, Berkshire,
April 14.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

This should reach you by the first morning delivery. The quiet carriage with ladies and children was noisier than the monkey-house at the Zoo. The women talked of their husbands, and gave them utterly away; the children fought and howled, and nearly killed themselves pulling things out of the rack. The serious gentleman smiled at me, and, as I did not respond, he went on smiling at the fields. The row got worse, and he whispered, "I hope this won't last all the way to Chippenham," and I agreed. We conversed with difficulty, but I did manage to catch some of the information he was anxious to give me about that place, which I told him I had never been to. He said I would like it. He mentioned the names of residents, but the only one I recognised was Smith. He seemed to think it his duty to identify this Smith. "It's a house at the corner of two roads, with a copper beech in front," he said. "Very likely," I replied;

"I've not seen it." "A first visit," he said, and smiled, and I smiled too. That encouraged him to tell me that Mr. Smith was at the works all day, that Mrs. Smith scarcely ever went out, and that there ought to be someone to show me the sights of Chippenham. A little before we got to the junction he offered to show me the prettiest walks about there. He asked me if I liked butterscotch, and I said I loved it. "How about chocolates?" I said I loved them too, and he jumped out almost before the train stopped and rushed towards the refreshment-room. I crossed to the other side of the platform, where my train was waiting, and got in and watched. He came along, his hands full of chocolate boxes and paper packets, and went smiling up to our carriage, where the noisy children received him with shouts of joy. "Mar! Mar!" they yelled, "the kind gentleman has got us some sweets!" He got in and sat with the parcels on his knee till the guard shut the door, and we were parted for ever. I do hope he gave the sweets to the children. It is good to work for others. At Stedding a maid asked for me, and directed my luggage to be brought on, and we walked to the house, where tea and my kind hostess awaited me.

Oh, mother, I have used up all the time without telling you anything, and I've such a lot

to tell! At all events, you will know that your daughter has wherewithal to lay her head (that's mixed)—the girl's waiting. Love to the dears—the children, I mean, not the Hussars.

Yr. lov. dr.,

ETHEL G. H.

XXVIII

Chepe, Stedding, Berks.

MY OWN DEAR GRACE,

What do you think? That dear Miss Adelaide Newsome has asked me to visit her for the Easter vacation. She came again to us in March, and I read a little to her, and talked a great deal more. Also I sang, and she said that I had no voice, and that I acted the singing. She is one of the awful persons who know the truth and speak it. And she knows such a lot about pictures and music, and German and French, and Italian and history, and politics and literature. What's more, she really does know; it isn't dodging or pretending with her. I wish my memory was anything like hers.

On the day next succeeding (as the Prayer-Book says) my arrival the maid (all the indoor servants are maids) brought me coffee *and* tea and wispy bread-and-butter when she called me. Having completed my toilette and examined all the furniture in the room, I went downstairs, and in the morning-room was my hostess, and never a sign of breakfast. Miss Newsome, who rises with the lark, wore an overall of (I think)

black glazed calico, and looked gigantic, and had a feather brush in her hand. She offered to show me the house, evidently to give them time to set the things. Off we went, upstairs and downstairs, going along passages and corridors, into rooms blue, yellow, and red: morning-rooms, first and second drawing-rooms; into cupboards, closets, and whatsoever rooms man has built and woman adorned. The furniture, dear! Louis Quinze, been in the family for centuries, and kept in absolutely perfect condition! Marquetrie, with *pietra dura* decoration; Boule furniture, Flemish furniture, china, miniatures, spinets, and I don't know what all. Books ancient and modern, works of reference from the first edition of the Great (French) Encyclopædia to this month's A.B.C. I said I should like to read something about Chartres Cathedral that you've just seen. I was shown the architectural part of the library, and had to drag out a thing like a giant atlas with plates of Chartres and look at them. Miss Newsome takes you at your word. She has all the French memoirs, rows of them. I kept wondering when breakfast would be ready. We went to other rooms, and she showed me pictures of all the Chepe houses. This one is not really old; it's a literal (?) copy of the Chepe of George II., only the rooms are larger.


Dear Grace, I longed for food, but remembered manners. *Hours* elapsed. I felt like the Swiss Family Robinson would have felt if they hadn't shipwrecked themselves on easy terms. At last I felt quite queer, and she noticed it and asked me what was the matter, and I exclaimed, "Oh, Miss Newsome, I *am* so hungry?" "We shall soon have *déjeuner*, my dear," she said quietly. "Meanwhile come with me." And we went into a still-room, and she gave me a wine-glass of some delicious cordial and some buttery biscuits like porcelain. She said that Cicely ought to have told me that *déjeuner* was at eleven. Then the chief maid came up, announcing the long-desired meal. Oh, it was lovely!—sort of early lunch, with black coffee at the end. Soup and fishes and little *bifteks*, and honey and salad, and red wine and white wine. And the cooking—well, I never had anything like it, and thought it perfection, especially something with veal and spinach and mushrooms and few other things in it, which gave me a foretaste of Paradise. But Miss Newsome sent it away, and reproached herself bitterly with having let me eat it.

After *déjeuner* Miss Newsome went away, and soon after "Miss Hobson was begged to be so kind as to attend Miss Newsome in her room." With her there was a poor woman who had lost

her favourite child. I was asked what I had thought of the "Fillet de Veau a la Marechale de Schomberg" ("The dish I sent away," Miss Newsome interpreted). I said it was perfectly lovely, and the afflicted woman wept, and begged madame to forgive her. The *plat* could not have been right if mademoiselle liked it—a *plat* that only madame and a few others could understand! It was the cook who hadn't lost any child; she was in grief about the Schomberg thing, and went out miserable. On the mat was a ghastly and trembling object, which I recognised as Cicely, the maid who had not told me about breakfast. Miss Newsome bade me stay, and the erring maid came in and was charged with having compassed my demise. She looked as if she would cheerfully have been hanged rather than face Miss Newsome. Her language is polite and painfully accurate, and so full of pity and indignation that really I felt for the girl. She has a way of making you feel as if you'd outraged all the laws, human and Divine, though she speaks quietly and doesn't storm. And it isn't only that; she has a way of making you want her to think well of you. It's no use saying you don't care. I've tried that.

She asked me to copy out and translate something from Mme. de Sévigné. Her poor eyes are better, but she mustn't use them much. The

copying I managed, but I made a regular hash of the translating, and got so wild I thought I'd chance it and let it go at that. I didn't mind it being bad—I'm not a French scholar nor a lady of letters—but I knew it was worse than it need be, and I couldn't bear her to think I hadn't done my best. So I did it all over again, and when I'd got the last ounce out of myself I read it to her; and when she said, "It's nearly all wrong, but it is honest work," I felt an emotion rare with me—the glow of conscious virtue. It is a comfort to feel just once in a way that you've a right to be pleased with yourself. We corrected (re-wrote) the thing, and just as we'd done in came a gentleman (badly dressed) with a lot of lovely trouts, which he'd caught in our river. After com'l'mens, we all went through the garden and across two fields to the river, which is very little, and the gentleman showed us where he caught the fish; and then we strolled about the garden, which is Dutch, and looks as if it was put away in tissue paper every night. The gentleman was gray, but cheerful, and when Miss Newsome was called away he told me a lot about her, and said she was a most remarkable woman, and that Stedding couldn't go on without her. "The whole town looks up to her," he said. "They do go through the form of asking me and Sir William



our opinion because we're J.P.'s, and have some land about here, but Miss Newsome settles everything." A landlord and J.P.! Heavens! what a swell! You wouldn't have thought it to look at him!

We got to talking about fly-fishing, and I asked him to show me how to do it, so we went down to the stream (it isn't a river) and he showed me how to cast. It looked easy enough, so I tried, and caught lots of things—my own hat, a leg of his trousers, and a whole tree. It was most annoying, particularly as he could make the thing drop where he liked. He was very encouraging, and said I should soon get it with practice. "I haven't anything to practise with," I said, and he offered to leave his rod at the house. That was kind of him! He taught me to tie the flies on, and said he'd show me how to strike and play a fish when he came back from Wiltshire in a day or two. He told me how it was done, but you can't learn it by telling. He had to go, so we returned to the house, and Miss Newsome suggested that he should show me the way to Stedding. I was delighted, and got into my "quiet" jacket (your style, dear) in record time, and off we went. We explored the venerable and famous town of Stedding, and the kidney-potato stones were horrid. Stedding's about the size of the

island in St. James's Park pond, and it's famous because Queen Elizabeth slept there one night. Not much of a distinction; she could sleep anywhere, and seems to have been very fond of her bed. The people kept touching their hats and staring at me (they do stare, these country people), and they called my friend Squire, and Mr. John and Mr. Higgs. The Berkshire language isn't London English, which is the best, but it's heaps better than what they speak in the North. After we'd explored Stedding, which took quite twenty minutes, we pulled up at a confectioner's, and Mr. John or Mr. Higgs said, "I think you're a young lady who likes humbugs and blackguards," and I nearly said, "That's why I took to you." However, I checked my talent for comedy repartee, and said: "I'm sorry you have formed so low an opinion of me." Whereupon he grinned like a stuffed fox, which he is very like, and said: "Very sorry, but I have. Come in this shop with me, and I'll show you I'm right." In we went, and the girl behind the counter darted into the parlour, and out came the shopkeeper, smiling like a street nigger. "A few Stedding humbugs and blackguards, please," he said, and she poured out some long, bright yellow things with a white kernel inside them, and some square things without kernels. Mr. John said the long

ones were "humbugs" and the square were "blackguards," and he was much amused, and I ate both. They give you exquisite feelings on the tongue. He offered me a big tin of them, and was surprised when I said mother didn't like people buying things for me. "Very strict, your mother," he growled.

I bought a box for Cyprian, and the woman said she would send it direct, and I gave her the address, and when I said Glover's Hotel, Nightingale Place, Piccadilly, Mr. John snapped out, "Mother staying there?" "Mother keeps the hotel," I answered. He reflected, stared at me, and said: "Well, why shouldn't she? No harm in that. Come along, Miss Hobson, I'll put you in your way back." As we went we were dogged by a phaeton with a lovely pair of chestnuts and a groom of surpassing beauty, who fancied himself to a disgusting degree. I asked Mr. John to walk slower or faster, because I hate being dogged, and he turned round and waved his hand, and the horses slowed. "That groom is polite as well as handsome," I said. "It's a pity he's so vain. When I get rich I'm going to have a phaeton and pair and drive them myself."

"How do you propose to get rich?" he said. "It's not so easy."

"Oh, I'm on the stage, and I shall marry a

rich lord. Most of us do," I said; and that led to some talk about the profession, and all the time the stealthy phaeton followed us, but not so near, but suddenly it rattled up and stopped in front of us. Mr. John said: "You'd like a ride, wouldn't you? This is my phaeton." Up I got, and Mr. John took the reins, and Beauty nipped up behind, and we drove off through Stedding Street, and the people bowed down before us, and I was happy. Mr. John began telling me how to drive, and, seeing he liked teaching people things, I asked him a heap of questions, and at last changed places with him and drove a long way by myself, and he says I'm a born whip. I got thinking of Miss Newsome, and said I oughtn't to be late, so he pulled up at a door in the paling of a wood, and he showed me a path which brought me to a lodge on the other side of Stedding, near Chepe. The man at the lodge asked whether I came from the house, and I said Mr. John let me in and told me this was the way to Chepe, and he said, "Thank you, madam," and opened the gate and raised his hat, and out I walked. You should have seen my walk. It was a lovely exit. I related my adventures to Miss Newsome, who told me that Mr. John is Mr. John Higgs, who owns most of the land here; his family is old, one of them was a pal of Hardicanute. He de-

spises the English aristocracy, and says they are not English or aristocrats, and he rarely makes friends of strangers. He is, unfortunately, married. Please, dear, write to me at once; I want to keep the envelopes addressed C/o Miss Newsome, Chepe, Berks, and I've told 'Stace to write and not to use a "Gone to the Bad" envelope.

Your loving friend,

ETHEL GLADYS HOBSON.

XXIX

*Chepe, Stedding, Berks,
April.*

DEAR 'STACE,

Of all the cheek! of all the bluff! You say "as you (that's me) are in the wrong about Estelle. I (that's you) accept your implied apology, and trust that our former happy relations will be restored." I am *not* in the wrong; I didn't apologise (or mean to), and our relations were not happy. You may have thought I was, but all the time I felt that you were fickle. I only write now because I've got into the habit of writing to you, and I'm too busy to break it off all at once. Oh, 'Stace, I am having the loveliest time, living the modern comedy-country-house life which the swagger actors play at and make such a hash of. I've a maid (Cicely) of my own, whom I saved from exile and disgrace. I ride in phaetons, and I pursue my studies in polite literature in a library 80 x 60 (this is an estimate). My French has come with a Chifney rush, and each day I have to look fewer words out. I've lately read Marmontel, Berquin, and Paul and Virginie. Who

said the French weren't moral? I have made another friend, so now my friends are Grace Martin (a lady semi-noble), Mr. Jessey (a Free Church divine), Mr. John Higgs (a wealthy landowner here, like a fox), a captain (Melladew), a lord (Conyers), some Welsh Hussar subs., and an acting manager. I don't include Ducie and the acting manager's on appro.!

Also I've made an enemy—a Mr. Budgett, a large, fat, patronising, drivelling rotter, who's been in trade, and bought an estate here to make himself into a gentleman, and hasn't succeeded. The other day we were at tea, and Budgett must needs begin patronising the stage and moralising about it, which is quite *démodé*, as the stage keeps its own moralisers nowadays, doesn't it? He was maundering in that style, and saying that respectable people didn't like to be associated with it in any shape or form. So I spoke, and said that could scarcely be the case, or they wouldn't send their sons to a school kept up by an actor's money, and be so precious keen about getting the masterships. He said: "I don't understand. What school?" I replied: "Dulwich School, founded by Alleyn, the actor." And Mr. Higgs laughed in high glee, and said, "Bravo, Miss Gladys! Quite right to stand up for your own people! Sorry you spoke, Budgett, eh?" And old Budgett

squirmed and went red, because he wants to get in with Mr. Higgs and the county people. Seeing his embarrassment, I turned the conversation to cardboard boxes (which was his business), and Miss Newsome said, "Mr. Budgett can tell us all about that;" and he was not pleased, though he needn't have been afraid of her, for she's a Radical, and doesn't mind how people make their living.

The property next to Chepe belongs to the Earl of Glastonbury, and our river runs through a part of it, which they stole from Miss Newsome's grandfather, and squared the judge by making him a peer. The Glastonbury people want Chepe badly, but it's been tied up so that they can never have it. All the same, they catch the fish which really belong to us, and which have got so wily that, if you're fishing from our land, they swim into the Worple water, and *vice versâ* (that sentence has got twisted; please straighten it). Glastonbury doesn't live at Worple, but some of the Finnies are always hanging about there.

I have learnt to fly-fish per favour, as you business people say, of Mr. Higgs, who is very kind to me. So far sport's not been good, as the trout are overfeeding themselves with May fly, which has been fool enough to come before its time. Yesterday I caught three, and one big

one rushed off into the Worple water. I climbed the railing, and lured him with a silver gray, and landed him after a very exciting struggle. There being no one about, I went on fishing the Worple water, and got some others, and, following the stream, got a long way from Chepe.

I was turning back when a big un rose, and I dropped the tail fly at his address, and then the fun began. He rushed and tore and jumped out of the water, and hid under a rock, and I played him till I thought my arm would drop. At last he was a bit too clever and ran himself a bit too near a shallow, where I detained him. I just got the hook out of his lip when someone said, "Well caught indeed! You played him beautifully." It was a dark, slight young man, whose chest hadn't developed. I hastily put the fish in my bag, and said:

"Can you tell me the quickest way to the house? I'm afraid I'm very late."

"Oh, there's time," he said; "I'll show you."

"Are you staying at Chepe?" I said, thinking he was a visitor.

"Oh, not likely," he replied; "Worple's my resting-place. I'm Oscar Finnies."

"I'm Miss Ethel Gladys Hobson, and I'm staying with Miss Newsome," was my answer.

"And you've been trespassing and poaching."

I've watched you an hour and more. Now I've got your name and address, we can get a summons," he said.

"Well, Mr. Oscar Finnies," I said, "you are playing it low down. Here are your fish" (I threw them all out)—"not those three, they're mine—and you can have them, and I'll send you the money for the fine, because I know Miss Newsome wouldn't like to be mixed up with your family, who stole the meadow from her people. You know you did! Take your fish! Why don't you pick 'em up?"

He stared at me, but wasn't angry; in fact, he smiled.

"Don't take it that way," he said; "I wasn't in earnest. I shan't split, and I didn't really watch. I thought you were one of the Worple ladies; only now I see that's absurd."

"And why is it absurd?" I said.

"Oh, you're much too young and pretty," he said. "Excuse my being personal, but that's the only difference," he went on, as what you call the Artemis look stole o'er my features.

"Don't apologise," I answered, undoing my rod. "Good manners are not for a criminal like me! You're too sarcastic, suggesting that I could possibly be taken for a Lady Finnies. Won't you have this and any other engines I have about me?" and I held out the rod.

"You seem to know the Act," he said.

"My friend, Mr. Higgs, told me about it," I said, putting on my gloves and dropping the rod, which the Hon. Oscar picked up with alacrity.

"Do you know Mr. John?" he cried. "Isn't he a good sort?"

"Mr. Higgs is an English gentleman," I said, not seeing the rod he was holding out.

"Not the only one, I hope," he said, as I walked on. "Oh, Miss Hobson," he cried, coming after me, "you're not going to leave your fish, surely?"

"They're not my fish," I said.

"Wait a minute," he shouted, and dashed off and brought back the big one. "You must take this, after landing him so cleverly."

"Really, he's a Chepe trout. I saw him in our water last week," I said; and he dropped him in the creel and smiled. He's not handsome, but he has a pleasant look.

"You wouldn't believe it, I suppose," he went on, "but there's a difference between the Worple and the Chepe fish. I'll show you," and he was off again. "See," he continued, panting, when he came back with more fish—"see that mark behind the fin. All the Chepe fish have it."

"Let's see," I said, and took one out.

He was quite right; it had the spot.

"I could not keep Miss Newsome's fish," he said.

"It was caught on Worple land," I remarked.

"That," he said, "is a technicality;" and they went the same way. "Now we'll look at the others;" and he fetched them. They had the Chepe spot, and went back to their pals—all but one.

"Oh, that's a Worple one," I said. "I couldn't take a Worple trout," and I held it up by the tail; it was the smallest of the lot.

"A Finnies trout you mean," he said sadly.

"Finnies, if you like."

"I thought so! You're angry with me, that's what it is. Was I rude? I didn't mean to be," he went on. His voice is nice.

"Perhaps it's your natural manner," I said.

"That's it, Miss Hobson," he said; "I've an awful manner, worse luck! I'm afraid you think I'm a real outsider."

"Oh no; not at all," I said, trying to find the Chepe spot on the trout.

"Well, then, will you keep the Worple one?" he said.

"Suppose the stolen property's found on me?" I said.

"It can't be, if you have it for dinner," he pleaded.

"It'll be on my conscience," I said.

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"It's a very small one," he said, and put it in the bag. He accompanied me to the gate in the fence, and we talked on general topics.

A suivre (if I think fit),

Yours sincerely,

GLADYS LUTTRELL.

XXX

MY DEAR GRACE,

After reading my account of the Hon. Oscar Finnies, would you believe that he turned up to tea two days later? Knowing that Miss Newsome must hate the name of Finnies, I hadn't told her where I got my big bag from. Luckily she introduced me directly I came in, and, seeing my surprise, said:

"Don't be alarmed, Gladys; this Mr. Finnies is guilty—all of them are—but he's not dangerous: he's only a collateral."

"That's so, Miss Hobson," he said, looking me in the eyes without moving a muscle. "It would take an epidemic to make me an Earl."

"Isn't that rather a high price for other people to pay?" I said.

"Oh, I didn't mean people generally—only my people, you know," he said quickly.

"A discriminating epidemic," said Miss Newsome.

"I shall be vaccinated all the same," I said, and he quite coloured up, and suddenly asked:

"Do you care for trout-fishing, Miss Hobson?" and kept me on the *qui vive* for ten min-

utes, while Miss Newsome expatiated on my success.

"I'm going to fish Mr. John's water," he said, "and as he's a friend of yours" (I glared) —"of yours, Miss Newsome—perhaps I can show Miss Hobson the best places for sport."

"I think Mr. Higgs means to do that himself. Miss Hobson is a pupil of his," said Miss Newsome.

"I can swear to that," he said.

"How can you swear to anything you've not seen, Mr. Finnies?" I said.

"Oh, well, you know, Miss Newsome has just told me," he said, pretending to laugh, but that got him off fishing for the rest of the time.

Since then, besides meeting him when I went fishing at Downs (Mr. John's estate), chance has thrown him a good deal across me. He is liable to be in the High Street at any hour of the day. He has offered to take me long and short walks and drives, but I couldn't go without a chaperon, and told him so. He said: "You don't want a chaperon. You're not out yet." "Not out!" I exclaimed. "Why, I'm blooming," which amused him. He is in a Government office of the kind where you're nominated and the competition's limited—those are the aristocratic offices—and his success makes him think there's something to be said for the doc-

trine of special providence. We had a noble bow from old Budgett in his "Broosh," which I don't get when I'm alone! The Hon. Oscar just returned the bow (which I didn't), and said: "Let's get on or that fellow 'll stop. I can't stand those slithy Wesleyites. The Kaffirs are rough and rainy, but you may get a tip out of them; but these dissenting people—oh my!"

"I don't know about Wesleyites," said I, "but my friend Mr. Alfred Jessey, who is a Free Church parson, is worth all the other sort I've come across!"

"But you're church, Miss Hobson?"

"Yes—my father was," I said. "P'rhaps I should be churcher if we had some abbeys and priories in the family."

He laughed and said: "Nothing like having your grab early." Ask your mother about the Finnies and Henry VIII., and ask her, too, how Mr. Oscar can be related to Ducie (he is), and just before him in succession to the Earldom of Glastonbury. He says he is; they're both a long way off, and it's any odds against their wearing the strawberry leaves or whatever leaves those people do wear. Mr. Oscar is not prejudiced against the stage like Mr. Samuel Budgett. He prefers a variety show, as he calls it, but he has thought over what I've said to him about acting, and is going to see Aunt Gertie

in "As You Like It" when he goes back to town. My visit terminates soon, alas! Miss Newsome has been awfully kind, Mr. Higgs is a dear, and Cicely weeps at my imminent departure. My correspondence with Mr. Talbot languishes through his infatuation for Estelle, All the same, he's on the look-out for an autumn engagement for me. 'Stace is a good pal, though weak about women. Name for Estelle—la belle Bonbonnière—looks as if she came off a chocolate box. All love.

Your devoted friend,

E. G. HOBSON.

XXXI

T. R. Horton.

MY DEAREST GRACE,

Soon after I returned from Berkshire Aunt Gertie's company came to town, their manager having got the St. George's Theatre for the rest of the season. I have seen Aunt Gertie several times; she is a great success, and the papers have been very kind. Some of them remember her playing in London before she married Uncle Rupert. If it hadn't been for him she would have been a leading lady in London years ago. She has been approached by a syndicate, which offered to run her at her own theatre for five years, and why do you think she refused? Because she is going to be married! To Mr. Rogers, who has been devoted to her ever since he first met her before she met Uncle Rupert! They are going to America. Mr. Rogers has private money, and though he is rather strict, I like him very much, and he simply dotes on Aunt Gertie. His Touchstone is a great performance! he's the only man in the profession who can play the part, and it's rather curious he should play it at the very theatre where the

manager (Mr. Quentin—*nē* Isaacs) was a ghastly failure as Touchstone.

At one matinée I saw 'Stace in the lobby, and he was most formal, not to say pathetic, because I had ragged him about Estelle. He actually called me Miss Luttrell, and was so distant he took me in, and I said he didn't seem very glad to see an old friend, whereupon he said that was a title he did not venture to claim.

"Oh, just as you like," I said. "Don't think I want to know you. Good-day, Mr. Talbot;" and, as I turned off, he said, "Fifteen to me, twenty-five to me, a hundred and thirty to me," counting as if he'd scored on me, which, of course, I couldn't allow, so I came back, and we made it up, and he was very nice, and we went out to five o'clock after the show. He doesn't really care about Estelle, and I believe he kept it up just to put me in a rage. He is coming to read his comedy to me and mother. It is such a modern comedy that I do not think mother ought to be present.

Another of my friends turned up at the St. George's. We had a grand circle proscenium box—they were playing "The Merchant"—and during the second entr'acte in walked the Hon. Oscar, *très soigné*, and looking very classy, in spite of his sallow complexion and undecided features. He talked more to mother than to

me, which was good manners. He likes Aunt Gertie immensely, and has seen every piece twice at least, and says there's a lot more in Shakespeare than he'd any idea of, and he thinks of reading Shakespeare. I congratulated him on his enthusiasm. "Oh," he said, "I only came on the chance of seeing you, and then I got interested in the plays." He is going pelagic sealing, which sounded like a kind of sport; but it's some political affair—he calls it a commission—and he's one of the secretaries, and gets better pay and exes into the bargain. Mr. Higgs had charged him with a message to me—an offer to teach me shooting if I'd come to Stedding in October. Kind Mr. John! Wish I could, but I shall be earning my bread at the cost of the British public instead of killing Mr. John's partridges.

Had a look at the grand house the good old Master has chosen for my noble friend Grace Bohun Martin. When I want to vex any of the ladies of the company I shall ask them whether Shepherd is spelt like that or Shep-pard, and shall be careful to explain that it's Shepherd Street, Park Lane, and their servile souls will swell with envy! Don't you think I'm a nice girl? Sorry you're stopped getting well; still, dearest, you have gained a great deal, and you'll gain more, I hope and believe and pray. Thank

your mother for so kindly explaining how the Finnies and Ducies stand in regard to the Glastonbury peerage. I'm glad Ducie has the worst of the weights. With great love to you and most respectful obeisances to your mother. I count on seeing you very soon. We finish this week, and I shall be in town till 12th, when the tour begins—when that's done pantomime rehearsals at Leeds or Sheffield; they won't settle which I am to go to; it's the same panto. at both places.

I always am

Your loving friend,

ETHEL.

TWO YEARS LATER

XXXII

*Olympic, Layton,
November 26.*

DEAREST GRACE,

The stars in their courses fought against Sisera, and they're doing the same thing for me. The star this time is your beautiful Conrad Fletcher, who is touring with "Lady Millicent's Escape." He's of the rather-reign-in-hell-than-serve-in-heaven sort, which means doing the No. 2 towns as his own manager instead of playing lead at a West End theatre. Nita Devereux, their *ingénue*, was wanted for rehearsals at the Sheridan, and, a week ago, I got the part, which isn't good, but it fills up three weeks. Mr. Conrad Fletcher may be (as you say) like a Græco-Roman statue. Most certainly he's un-English; I don't admire morbid-ezza and thick, crisp black hair, which curls when it gets the chance. He looks ten years older than he really is, and has less modesty than most actors.

Grace, I'm getting so tired of it all! I was

sticking the Layton programme and notices into my press-cutting book to-day, and I foolishly must look at the old ones. For more than two years—that is, since I began again—I've not been out two months altogether. Drama, melodrama, farce, comedy, and pantomime—I've played them all. Truly, I've had practice, and what's the result, when I want to come to London?—an offer to walk on and understudy a ten-line part! In two years, as everyone says, I've got the practice of five, and at the end of five years I shall get the same offer. I'm tired of the life: the shifting from town to town each week, of the managers' (*and* manageresses') impertinence and conceit, of playing bad parts with good companies and good parts in bad companies. It's horrible, hideous, disgusting; only it's better than being something in a private hotel. After all, an actress is a lady. So I shall go on as we all do, hoping for the bit of luck which works out at 500 to 3 against each of us. Heavens! what a life!

One thing I have learnt, which I wouldn't tell anyone but you: I'm not a real actress, like Aunt Gertie and Miss Bathurst, and two or three others, but I can imitate. I'm a born mimic; *if I've once seen a thing done, I can do it nearly as well*, except when I have to be natural, and sincere, and touching. That's why I'm going

for comedy more than pathos—not that anyone but myself knows that my emotion is all fake. The public certainly don't, or they wouldn't weep profuse. Perhaps this will be the making of me, as it has been of the great Bertha Montessor. She's been giving the public the mimicry of serious feeling for thirty years, and they believe it's genuine because she puts such a grave face on the matter, dresses so well, and realises the bourgeois idea of a titled lady. What a fraud that woman is! Your Duse is the only great actress, the only actress who makes me feel as Aunt Gertie does. But what's the use of talking? "Moral Bertha," dear "Bertha of the Seven Platitudes" (as they call her), is the winning horse. I'm sure she's right to be "moral," because, as long as an actress (*and* manageress) is moral, she can be mean, servile, cruel, jealous, vindictive, avaricious, selfish, bullying, and the fifty other things our Bertha is!

You dear creature, to warn me so gravely against *affaires de coeur*! You take "Jack," and Lyttelton, and Mann much too seriously. In a theatre there are few love affairs—they're not even amourettes; we're too jealous of one another! Only two people are allowed to preach to me—you and Mr. Jessey. Do you remember our pilgrimage to Arbour Road that blazing

Sunday last July? How strange Camden Town seems now, and wasn't I proud when my fastidious intellectual friend was conquered by my only preacher! I raged when you calmly said he had "the authentic note," but forgave you for "lips touched with fire."

The books, French and English, are very welcome. I read a good deal. My correspondence has gone down, since both 'Stace and Aunt Gertie are away, and the Welsh Hussars in Ireland, and the Hon. Finnies (which he doesn't like being called) on some commission or other in foreign lands. Mother and the others are very well; "Glover's" is slowly, very slowly, paying off its mortgage; and Tom's singular talent for picking losers isn't at all a help. My own Cyprian Hamish is growing fast, and very like his eldest sister, only beautiful.

Our Mr. Conrad has one odious quality in an actor. He pretends not to care about applause, and affects not to be jealous, and all the time he's working quietly and secretly for his own hand. I found him out in the scene I have with him. He gave me the centre of the stage, and nobody noticed me, because all the interest of the scene is with him. If he'd taken the centre, the audience wouldn't have had *to be searching for him* all the time. Subtle, wasn't it? But I do say he's the only manager I've met who has

any knowledge of human nature, of what people would do in the circumstances. Perhaps the others had been on the stage too long. Don't think I want to pull your idol to pieces. I know exactly how much *you're* given to idolising actors, and I'm quite expecting you to ask me where you saw Conrad Fletcher. You haven't seen him, dear; you bought his photograph as the model for one of the faces in the picture you did of a scene in "Romola." A long letter; pantomime is coming, when "artists" cannot write, as you know.

Your loving friend,

ETHEL GLADYS.

XXXIII

Lyceum, Castleford.

DEAR MOTHER,

Excuse another scrappy letter. We're playing twelve performances a week; you know what that means. The panto.'s settled down and is doing great, but I hear we knock off Monday and Friday matinées next week, and so do the Royal. Looks like an arrangement. My songs go tremendously. I never get less than three recalls for "Dream of me, my darling," and they simply shriek at "Lend me a bit to go on with." My dear manager, Pawkie Watson, has been very sweet since I made a hit. I didn't tell you that I seriously offended him at the last rehearsal. In his solemn Scotch way he must make a speech to us about the reputation of the theatre and how to behave, and remember we're ladies and gentlemen! I wouldn't hear him out, and was going away, when he called out:

"Miss Luttrell, I haven't finished, and I want all the company here, like my other companies in Newcastle and Liverpool and Nottingham, to remember that they are at a high-class theatre. So, Miss Luttrell, I must beg you to stop."

"Really, Mr. Robert Watson," I said, "I'm not engaged to listen to your speeches. I was taught to behave by better people than a bankrupt theatrical printer, and I don't care for copy-book maxims in Lowland Scotch."

He looked more like a wily seal than ever, and fumbled with his spectacles, and limped about in speechless anger, and said, "Vara weel;" and I said, "Very well," and went away.

I owed him this for his trick over the *matinée* money—"half salary," the contract said—and then he pays a fourteenth instead of a twelfth, because I engaged for seven performances! Now I'm level with him. The last day or two he's been hopping about the theatre with our goblin acting-manager dancing attendance on him. He wants me to settle for next Christmas, and offers £15. Wish he may get me. And, after all this fuss about a high-class theatre, Pawkie Watson lets the *jeunesse dorée* come behind at five shillings a head, and they demoralise the chorus ladies. The goblin, who has ears like an idiot, a mouth like a frog's, and the hands of an ape, brings them round in droves—and he *can* drink champagne, too. I refuse to be introduced to anyone. Thank Heaven, I and Belle have a room to ourselves. The company is the usual thing—music-hall "artistes" (the "Semitic Sisters" are very fine and large) and comedians

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who never get engaged at any other time of the year. But for the money I wouldn't take a pantomime engagement again. Love to all.

Your hurried and affectionate daughter,

ETHEL GLADYS.

XXXIV

Castleford.

MY DEAR GRACE,

Your letters are like moorland air in a music-hall dressing-room. It is Sunday; for an hour a peal of bells have given me a dream full of coloured and throbbing light. Now it is quiet I am having breakfast before a big fire, and I think well of myself in a soft furry dressing-gown, which came to the theatre on Christmas Eve from the Maison Poulet, rue de la Paix, Paris. Do you know that gown? Otherwise I am dressed ready to take the train to Rigg Haugh, and walk in this sparkling air for miles across the heath. But no one, male or female, comes for me, so, as usual, I shall go by myself. Most of my dear colleagues have made rows with me, and Belle Avondale—the exception—doesn't breakfast till four o'clock; but, then, she has supper at the Palatine, not alone *bien entendu*. My supper is plain and lonely. I dine with her this evening at the Fleece, with a rather nice man who came down from London last night. He is to bring a friend to square the party. These unknown friends are risky.

I pray that he'll turn out decent. We shall be flooded with music-hall and musical theatre talk. Belle's been at the Folly more than a year, and she knows the true truth about that home of art and beauty. No, dear, Belle is not a great *friend*; she is only a convenient acquaintance for me, as I am for her. Theatrical life makes such acquaintances seem more intimate than they really are. They don't last—they're not meant to last—but if you can hit it off with a lady in a panto. co. (which is hard) you're much more comfortable. You know I can't live without sympathy. Of course these friendships are all on the surface and not very sincere, so they're good training for society.

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Dots represent an interval for looking at the *Sunday Chronicle*. The Semitic sisters, Millicent, Réne (*sic*), and Julia Lawson, which, being interpreted, is Miriam, Rebekah, and Judith Levi, have an interview with their portraits, and much about their ancient family, which is Cumberland! Will they be pleased at the full-length very chic likeness of Miss Belle Avondale, our principal boy? Thought they were going to have the *Chronicle* all to themselves, did they?

[•] [•] [•] [•]

Another interval for the *Umpire*, which neglects us for the Royal people. Mysterious

rumours about the Shakespearean season at the Amphitheatre; the great V. K. Nicholson is making himself pleasant! Rehearsals have been stopped. Considering the play is "Othello," and that they open on Saturday, it's running it rather close. Oh, merciful Heavens, look at this "Snapshot!" They're usually about councillors and that sort of person, and behold it's your humble friend! I am puffed up like the she-adder. "Delicate and *hautain* beauty, grace and poetic imagination." Notice the remarks, that are rather too near the truth. Who can have written it? I'll get a dozen to-morrow. Observe the sting in the sugar (mixed metaphors always on hand) about my voice; how clever to call it "domestic, not operatic." All the same, he's right, and I shall keep off those top notes.

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Interval for the weekly talk with Mrs. Gorple, my landlady, about the theatre and the faded glory of Perceval Crescent. I am not interested in the Castleford grandees of 1830, who lived in this part, and I am very glad "professionals" don't come here, being afraid of missing the last train. I have it all to myself. I can't stand the Falkland St. district, where the reek of *poudre de riz* and benzoline is enough to choke you. Mrs. Gorple is a jewel (uncut) and looks

after me beautifully, to please dear 'Stace; he recommended the house. I'm sure he has at some time or other corrupted the whole family with orders. "Such a nice gentleman, Mr. Talbot! So cheerful, and always a pleasant word, and so particular about your being looked after proper." That's 'Stace all over, getting people to take to him without trying, and making them treat me like a princess in delicate health.

The other night, when I came off after the first part, Belle would introduce me to a friend of a friend of hers. She said he was a press man, and she trembles before the press. He is a Mr. Walter Jervis. I asked him whether he wanted to interview me, as they always do, and he said he hadn't meant to, but it wasn't a bad idea, and he'd try, though it was a little out of his line. I asked what his line was, and he said he was a professor at the local University. I said, "Professor of what?"

"It's a new faculty," he said—"applied psychology."

"I never heard of it, Mr. Jervis."

"It's a science everyone practises," he said, "but it's only just been officially recognised."

"I don't practise it."

"Excuse me, Miss Luttrell, you do. You're practising it now without intending it."

"I never do anything I don't mean to."

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"You're doing it now without knowing."

"But, Mr. Jervis, how can you tell that?"

"Oh, it's my business," he said, smiling.

"Well," I said, "if everyone's always doing it, you're doing it now."

"Yes," he said; "but I know I'm doing it, but other people don't."

"That's not fair. You ought to tell them."

"And lose my best subjects? The difficulty in applied psychology is to get subjects to study from the life."

"I don't like being studied from life."

"What you don't like, Miss Luttrell, is knowing you're being studied from the life."

"That's the best of a post-mortem—one knows nothing of it. I begin to understand. Applied psychology; hasn't it another name?"

"Many other names. They vary according to the age and sex of the subject."

"And of the professor?" I said, which brought a smile to his clever face. "So," I went on, "Mr. Jervis, I know your precious science: it's finding out people's temperaments, characters, or whatever you call it. I can do that naturally without a long-named science to help me."

"Intuitionist!" he said.

"Now call names," I answered. "Mr. Jervis,

"I'll bet you anything I've found out more about you than you have about me."

"Be careful! I've found out a great deal about you," he said.

"Heaps and big heaps about you I've found out. To begin with, you're—— I'll tell you when next we meet. Now I must go," I said; for our long colloquy had attracted the attention of the London show girls and the swains the Goblin had brought round. So ended my meeting with Mr. Walter Jervis.

Now the sun is shining and the air is keen. To walk or not to walk? "Honorine," or Rigg Moor? You've given me the Balzac fever. (*A long, silent, poignant, dramatic interval.*) I decide to walk. Notice my deliberate, not to say reluctant, virtue, which is much more creditable than the easy virtue which is good by nature. (*One boot on.*) Time to catch the next train; three stations to travel with northerners, ferocious from hunger and church. (*Other boot on. A button went.*) An hour on the Moor, and catch the tea-train from Rigg Haugh. (*Hat, coat, and furry boa on. Exit tumultuously and drop gloves. End of Act I. of "Honorine, or Virtue Rewarded."*) Most likely I shall get wet.

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ACT II., SCENE I.

(Same set with lamps. Outdoor things on sofa. Tea avec muffins and cakes. L. of fire C. MRS. GORPLE drawing curtains of window up stage. Back cloth, with an inexperienced sunset performing. R. of table ME.)

Mrs. G. *(coming from window.)* Eh, you're bonny, Miss Luttrell, with the colour to your face like that. It must have been sharp on the Moor to-day. How you could go!

E. G. H. Principle, Mrs. Gorple, that's what it is. Mr. Gorple gone to bye-bye?"

Mrs. G. *(smiling)*. Well, miss, he has just closed his eyes.

E. G. H. Then you can have a cup of tea, can't you? There's another cup in the cheffonier. That's it; pray be seated. I should love a talk. *(Not true, but the good lady is much pleased. We talk of art—i. e., panto. Of lights of art as revealed in the picture papers and law-courts, of the Gorple family and of the bleaching trade as the road to ruin.)* It did for Gorple. My dear Grace, whatever the attractions of bleaching—its fascinations cannot be denied—resist them, and you will not be reduced to letting rooms to principal girls like Gorple.

Now Mrs. G. has gone, I can tell you of a strange meeting I had to-day on Rigg Moor. That bleak and healthy place was deserted, the natives being at dinner. Suddenly I saw a stranger among the stunted gorse. He was coming towards me; his gestures were frequent and wild, and on the wintry blast came sounds of anguish. "Merciful Heavens!" I ejaculated, "here is the local idiot!" Second thought suggested it might be an actor. The figure approached, raising its left arm. When it was near enough to be recognised, I gave it the bow and smile reserved for managers. The creature looked angrily at me and passed on. It was Mr. Conrad Fletcher. Rage, controlled by dignity, prevented me from looking back. Soon I heard quick steps behind me, and the short pants of the guilty. "Pardon me, Miss Gascoigne," he said, "I did not recognise you." I stopped and said quickly, "My name is not Gascoigne." "You know me?" he said. "You bowed and smiled; I'm sure of that." I looked into his eyes and said slowly, "May I ask your name?" whereupon his manner visibly changed, and he said in quite another tone, as he raised his hat, "Pray accept my apologies—a thousand apologies." "One will do, Mr. Fletcher," I said, and spoilt everything by laughing. "It's Miss Luttrell!" he shouted. "What a fool I

am! How do you do, Miss Luttrell? Why do you treat me thus?"

"I do not like to be cut in the public street."

"It's a moor," he said; "but never mind that. I'll tell you all about it. Which way are you going? To Rigg Haugh? So am I."

"You were going the other way," I said, as we set off.

"Very likely. But I was an Othello then. I've come down to play Othello at the Amphi, and I went on the Moor to practise in the open. It inspires me."

"It may get you into trouble."

"It has ere now. I was taken for an Anarchist. But what are you doing? Oh, I remember, you're in the Lyceum pantomime. I hope you've done well."

"England resounds with my success," I said.

"Of course, of course, I remember; all congratulations," he said, with horrid gravity.

"That will do, Mr. Fletcher," I said. "Evidently you haven't heard of it. Now tell me why V. K. Nicholson's not playing Othello."

"Rows—ructions—solicitors. They wired me on Friday, gave me my terms, and here I am, and have to play the part in six days."

"Have you ever played it?"

"Years ago. T. R. Sloppington. I must

have been lovely! What's your idea of Othello, Miss Luttrell?"

"Desdemona's not a good part," I said; and he went on talking about Othello the rest of the walk and in the train. The people in our carriage listened, and thought, with his "he's" and "she's," he was referring to some *cause célèbre*. He got out at Stainforth, the station before mine.

* * * * *

After dinner. Time: when churchyards and artistes yawn—at least I do. St. Nicholas-over-Rigg, which is nice and handy, rang out the third quarter as *we* came into Perceval Crescent. The dry air trembled with the sweet sound. I bid my companion good-bye, came in, and found that the unfailing Mrs. Gorple had banked up a good fire. Who was my companion? The fourth! you know the friend of Belle's friend, Mr. Teddie White—now, who was he? The Applied Psychologist, Mr. Walter Jervis! That is so. And, moreover, he wrote that intimate snapshot of me in the *Umpire*. And, all the time, Belle and Teddie White knew, and led me on to talk about it, and when I'd spoken freely and frankly (as is my habit), there was a great laugh and me bewildered. Mr. Jervis explained;

but I wouldn't take back a single word, and some were strong. This episode put us on the best of terms; and the dinner was real good, beautifully served in a private room, where the flame of wax candles in branching candelabra flickered on the wainscot of blackened oak. Belle was lovely in pale blue and shimmery silver, which suits her *bébé* beauty and fair dust-in-the-sunshine hair and bluest eyes. She's pretty, I always say; but she hasn't figure enough for principal boys. Mr. Teddie White is nice enough—a little too much determined to be a gentleman. Mr. Jervis is a gentleman without trying, and, forgive the expression a trying gentleman. We had arguments, and he was at great pains to demonstrate the exact degree of my errors, for which I shall always hate him. But I told the others about his precious applied psychology, and we all agreed that it was an utter fraud, and generally a vain thing fondly imagined. I have suspicions about this science; it's remarkably like flirtation, and not becoming in a professor, as I told him. He's a fearfully serious party by occupation, and is staying at Castleford during the holidays, to finish a book on something that sounded like "A Paregorical Cat." They yelled at the cat, and we discussed cats and paregoric, and mixed them up till we were all speechless with laughter. Seems ab-

surd; but, Grace dear, you'd have laughed as much as any of us if you'd been there.

After liqueurs and cigarettes, we adjourned to a drawing-room Teddy White had engaged. Other guests appeared, including two of our show girls, who were embarrassed in general conversation, but self-possessed in *tête-à-tête* with whisky accompaniment. Nora Palgrave, second boy at the Royal; Lucette Chevasse, their principal girl, came with their men—Lucette fearfully overdressed, Nora at the other extreme. Men kept dropping in, all provincial and commercial. Mr. Albert Shelmerdine, an elderly man, who would have been red-headed if he hadn't been bald, got Mr. Jervis to introduce him to me. He's a Castleford official of some sort, and tried to impress me because he knew Watson. They seem to have had every meal together, except breakfast in bed. Trust Pawkie to square the Corporation people. I found him odious and dull, and indicated the same; but it took a long time to pierce the belt of complacency which envelopes him. Like most outsiders, he thinks we can talk of nothing but the stage, so he must rejoice me with stories of Wilson Barrett and Bertha Montessor. Then he harked back to Pawkie Watson, and said he was a sharp business man.

"Well," I said, "if an Aberdeen father and

a Jew mother won't make you sharp and businesslike, I don't know what will."

This chilled his ardour a bit; but he rallied, and said portentously:

"Mr. Watson could have conducted a large commercial concern, Miss Luttrell. A theatre and a bong marshy are very much the same thing."

"Yes," I said; "you want a shoppie for both."

The Shelmerdine family must be in trade, for he favoured me with a speech about England's greatness resting on commerce, and then took the fragments of his bleeding heart to Lucette Chevasse.

We had some songs and comic recitations, and Nora Palgrave (O'Brien) made us scream at her imitations of popular actresses. Her Mrs. Mike Scott as a London *contadina* with an organ was too lovely; but when, as Bertha Montessor, she inculcated the elements of morality on the Archbishop of Canterbury, the room fairly rocked. One thing I must repeat: Nora's got the Montessor twang perfect. Imagine this in that voice, with appropriate gesture: "Yes, my lord, chastity is the best policy; but she that hath no better warrant for her—" The rest was drowned in roars and shrieks!

After this, sumptuous refreshments were

served in the large buffet, and the room resounded with popping corks, the rattle of plates and knives, and all, with one consent, talked at the same time. Some men started poker, and the women watched; and one by one they came in, and out came their natures. I shall remember Lucette's eyes, as, with a cigarette in the side of her mouth, she hung on every card. One of the show girls cried when she lost. Soon the row was fearful—laughs and shouts and short quarrels and the crackle of matches. In the other parts of the room flirtation was being carried on till it no longer deserved the name. Mr. Albert Shelmerdine, flushed with Heidseick and importance, came up, glass in hand, to where Mr. Jervis and I were sitting. "Quite a Bacchanalian scene, Miss Luttrell," he said. "Satyrs included," I said; and he glared savagely, laughed horribly, and said: "Sharp tongue Miss Luttrell—eh, Jervis? What's it matter? Charming girl!—all friends together—love Bohemian society;" and he lurched away.

"He thinks that a profligate Philistine is the same as a Bohemian," said Jervis. "That's as near as he'll get."

"Let's leave the real Bohemians," I said; "they're going to be rowdy."

So we slipped off *sans adieux*, and Mr. Jervis saw me to the Central, and asked me to let him

see me home, and to come and dine with him and his sister next Sunday. We had a merry talk about the scene we had just left. I said an actress ought to see all sides of life; she may have to play anything. He agreed, saying that some sides of life didn't want seeing often; you soon got all there was to get out of them.

"I don't think we're good at that kind of thing," he said. "The English go limp if you take the stiffening out of the buckram."

"There's not much gaiety while the stiffening's there," I said.

"We have not the art of gaiety, Miss Luttrell. Look at Shelmerdine; he doesn't know what it is. His pleasures—dinners and dances and garden-parties—have always been mainly business affairs, got up for some Corporation fellow, or to get his son a berth, or to marry his daughter. I should like to put Shelmerdine into the Athens of Pericles, and tell him to be happy without talking of money or eating and drinking too much."

"What a cruel thing to do!" I said, and we ceased to talk of Shelmerdine. Oh, but I forget! Did Eugène Fromentin write "Salammbô"? I'm afraid I've been giving myself away with Mr. Jervis. "Howlers" in classical and political things don't matter—they're still feminine—but one ought to be up in art and

literature. The night was quite warm in my sea-otter—which has provoked the Semitic Sisters to uncharitable remarks—and we didn't hurry to the station. We applied psychology. He's very nice—not silly about the profession, and doesn't confuse principals with ballets. He says, “*Ne te quæsiveris extra*,” a Latin and theatrical joke, which he translates, “Don't run after the chorus.” He is immensely proud of this joke. In other respects I like him, and am going to put him on probation for the circle of the elect, of which you were the first member. I feel a strong desire to introduce Mr. Jervis to you, and listen to your talk. St. Nicholas is chiming again—glad no *matinée* to-morrow. Farewell—in thy orisons remember me!

Loving and sleepy,

ETHEL.

XXXV

*Lyceum,
Monday.*

DEAR MR. FLETCHER,

Many thanks for suggesting a walk on Rigg Moor to-morrow, but we've a matinée, and I'm on so early I don't like running it so close. Very sorry "Othello" is such a trouble; I should let him slide, and chance it.

Yours very truly,

GLADYS LUTTELL.

XXXVI

L. T., Tuesday (Mat.).

DEAR MR. FLETCHER,

I've not, of course, had time to consider all you say, nor do I quite see how I am to help you, as I haven't seen "Othello" and don't know it well, and, moreover, the lady Desdemona is not *sympathique* to me. But I did not mean to underrate your task, and I don't want you to think I am irremediably flippant. By no means, only one can *over-think* parts, and when one's done all one can, isn't it wise to leave the rest to one's "demon"? Still, as you think I can help you, I will come to Rigg Moor by that train, and go back to the Central by the one *before* the 1.5. And I will read the play to-night, and give you the judgment of a critic who is quite inexperienced, and not at all competent, but who will bring a young and open mind to the subject. *Sursum corda*, Mr. Fletcher, which, being interpreted, is, Buck up!

Yours very truly,

GLADYS LUTTRELL.

XXXVII

Sunday Morning.

DEAR MR. FLETCHER,

Many and many congratulations! I am so glad! Some of our people were over at the Amphitheatre last night, and I heard how you were getting on, act for act, and never will I go through such torture again. Of course, I was careful not to show excessive interest, and, as no one knows of our friendship, they were not on the look-out. Aren't you pleased with the papers? They are very good, I think. They give the idea that the writers could play the part much better themselves if they only gave their minds to it; that is the journalist's way. To-day I shall see the possible critic of the *Mercury*, and shall let him know that you're never at your best on the first night. This goes by a trusty hand to the Amphi. in time to go up with your letters. And, for mercy's sake, don't get the hump!

Yours sincerely,

E. G. LUTTRELL.

XXXVIII

DEAREST GRACE,

This has been a very different Sunday. In the morning I went to hear Mr. Ernest Kilrose. You remember Mr. Jessey speaking of him? He is very good; perhaps too spiritual for me or for my mood. I was at Mr. Jervis's house, at Ardinghays, to dinner at two. His sister Edith is very nice; she is living with him till she gets married to a chemist (not a druggist), Dr. Ramond, a man whose great ability is spoilt by modesty. If he gets some Government appointment they will be married in June. He has a dangerous competitor, a Sir Crosby Parker, who seems to have been meant for an agent in advance.

I did not enjoy myself as much as I expected. And this is the reason: I've been helping Conrad Fletcher with "Othello," so far as one can do in a short walk on Tuesday and a long one on Friday. He is a curious sort of man, very much wrapped up in himself, not sociable, and yet he can't live without sympathy. Perhaps it isn't fair to judge a man who is on the eve of playing "Othello." We talked of him (C. F.)

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at dinner. They didn't know I'd been in his company. I mentioned some things that might do Conrad good in case Mr. Jervis was writing the *Mercury* notice. He had written it, and has now altered it, and rather annoyed his sister, who said he had been influenced by me, which he admitted and justified. They had a great argument about it. I think she's a little hard. She can argue impersonally, which, as you know, I never can do. Some people came into supper; they were very nice, and didn't think that everyone who plays in pantomime must be a black and lost sheep. I went back with a lady and her husband who live at Stainforth, and Mr. Jervis came to Ardinghay Station with us. It was a very pleasant day. I ought to have enjoyed it more.

Your loving
ETHEL.

XXXIX

*Lyceum,
Monday Evening.*

DEAR MR. FLETCHER,

I must say I don't understand your letter. What have I done, or not done? Surely you don't attach so much importance to my not sending you a telegram wishing you success. I'd seen you on Friday, and you were confident then. And I didn't beg any favours of Mr. Jervis, and, so far as I can judge, the *Mercury* notice is not "patronising and clumsily apologetic." Mr. Jervis would not let anyone affect his judgment, and all I told him were facts about you as an actor, which he was glad to know. How can you say my letter was formal? I don't think I ever wrote a formal letter in my life. I wish I had the knack without the nature. Aren't you really disappointed—not, as you say, because you weren't good, but because you have not done *what you wanted to do*? That is always your aim, isn't it? And as you always end by doing it, so you will this time, and you'll play "Othello" "as you want to," whether it's right or wrong, liked or disliked. Till then you will be

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in the super-sensitive state that makes you write letters like the one you've just written me. I can make allowances, knowing you a little better than I did before our walks and talks. Tomorrow I see your "Othello" without any fear of disappointment.

Yours sincerely,

GLADYS LUTTRELL.

XL

DEAR CONRAD,

Is that informal and obedient enough? I hope it will prevent you burning this without reading it. Certainly, I will come to-morrow whatever the weather may be, and not only to hear what you have to say about Sunday's letter. Oh no; I have something to tell you about last night. When I saw you at the Central last night, my heart jumped. You'd no business to lie in wait for me like that. And to speak like that with everyone knowing you, and perhaps me too! You talked all the way, and said such things, and wouldn't let me say a word. I've not been unjust to you, and I did not deliberately intend to hurt your feelings, nor to say the very things which (because you had been frank and sincere with me) I knew you would feel the most! And to say that when you had the awful responsibility of this big part on you I added to your troubles! You say cruel things, Conrad. I have never felt as I did when I got to my room; Belle was quite alarmed. My coon song went for nothing, except the malicious condolences of the Semitic

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Sisters, who said I wasn't quite so chirpy as usual. Nearly all night I was awake—and last week I was so happy. I shall go straight to Rigg Haugh for the first and last time. I have not seen "Othello" to-day, as you did not wish me to.

Yours sincerely,

GLADYS LUTTELL.

XLI

DEAR CONRAD,

I'll come on Friday. At this rate we shall get to know Rigg Moor; and on Tuesday I came to say good-bye to it and to you! That day turned out very different from what I expected. I was prepared for a passionate and fiery interview, for tones of reproach and for much indignation. Behold, I find a pleasant, light-hearted man, with no thoughts beyond the joy of a glorious day and the "dear friend" who is with him. He laughs at the wild man of the Central Station, he denies himself of yesterday. How many men are you, Conrad? It is lovely to be with you on those days. You make me suffer one day, and the next you make it all up to me many times. I almost believe that your soul was, as you said, set free and dancing in the cold sunshine. A soul-less man walked by my side! A man who will not let his dear friend see him act, because, indeed, he is not good enough yet! Am I not to settle what is good enough for me? The outcasts of the drama (panto-artists), sometimes talk of Shakespeare, and highly amuse me with their opinions

of a new Othello. Dear Mr. Fletcher, I am getting to know your real merits. C. Haason (our King of the Cannibal Islands) thinks but ill of you. Last night he got drunk earlier than usual, and wanted to go round to the Amphi. and play the last two acts for you. He praised me for not rushing to see you, and also swore at me throughout my dance. His was a breakdown, and he was carried off. Watson's got him on a term of years cheap, and with all faults—more than he bargained for. Excuse this long answer to your note of two lines. Long since my pen learned to talk, and sometimes it says too much. I shall go from Perceval Street; the distinctive sign will be a hat with blue and orange feathers. For Heaven's sake, don't rush up and down the Stainforth platform looking into every carriage! We'd better not travel together. Sincerely, dear Mr. Conrad,

Your dear friend and admirer,*

GLADYS LUTTBELL.

I shall catch it for that "*Mr.!*"—* *as artist*
—G. L.

XLII

DEAREST MOTHER,

You did not use to say my letters were "scrappy." 'Twas the other way about. There was nothing to tell, that's all. I am now perfectly comfortable here, being at daggers drawn with all the principals except Belle. I'm sure that's the best state of affairs during a panto. engagement. I don't mind the quarrels so long as I can keep clear of the reconciliations. Another of my introductions at Glover's; really, I'm as good as an agent in advance to you. Isn't Mr. John simply, absolutely, and completely admirable? I am so glad he was pleased. My income's going down rapidly—another matinée knocked off. Not that we're not doing well; it's a piece of Watson's astuteness, and he's working with the Royal people. We think it will make the run longer. What news about Aunt Gertie? Another cousin for me; unpatriotic of him to be born in America! That boy will be spoilt. I know Uncle Rogers; he's as soft as soap inside, for all his external roughness. I could always get round him. I'll write to aunt and give her some good advice. Weather lovely. The winter

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in these latitudes is rarely severe, owing to the balmy Gulf Stream. The Jervises are the only unprofessional friends I've made. Both are nice, particularly the gentleman. At present there's no prospect of their staying at Glover's, but they can't escape the common lot of mankind. They've produced "Othello" at the Amphi. and are doing great things. Enclosed is critique by Mr. Walter Jervis. The Desdemona is lovely. Her photos are selling like anything. We're not in it. Distribute my love according to desert.

Your loving daughter,

ETHEL GLADYS.

XLIII

MY DEAREST,

Your letter is very sweet, and I was glad to have it, and imagine you saying those things to me. Your voice is with me always; it seems to possess me, and, thinking of it, I thrill as when you told me that you loved me. As you spoke—how you speak, Conrad!—each note of your voice was repeated in me, and I felt as if I were being shaped to the cadence and rhythm of your speech. You have a strange power in your voice that held me fast, so that I listened, wishing the sounds would not stop. I was surprised I had never thought of your loving me. I knew you did not care for many people, that you were lonely and worried, and glad of a companion who in some way or other pleased the most fastidious man in the world. But love I had never thought of—you can hold yourself in hand, Conrad—for I never suspected, even when you made me angry and frightened that day at the station. I put it all down to “Othello.” When you said those things—you know what you said—it seemed that I ought not to hear them, that they should not be said, that one could not

listen to such speech. You went on, and my fear and shame dropped away, and I loved to hear you speak of me as no one has spoken to me. Conrad, I've never been in love. I'm glad of that. No man has made me feel as you have. I did not believe that any man could make me feel in that way. I did not know the feeling then. Was I very white when you made me walk to that seat? You spoke softly, as if you were stroking me to sleep, and I remember thinking how pretty the country looked from Rigg Moor; and really it's ugly, but the sky with the clouds drifting over the blue was lovely. Coming from the station I bought a picture of Rigg Moor, and shall keep it—not because it's very like. It was delicious to make you talk of yourself! There's a lot to know in you, Mr. Conrad Fletcher. How angry that man made me when he got in our carriage! You willed him out, and actually he got out at the next station. Of course, he'd have got out in any case, but I believe in your strong will.

Dear, I'm very happy in a new, strange way. One minute I want to tell everyone how happy I am, and another my happiness is that only you and I know of it. Something has happened that makes all other people insignificant, unimportant. Why are they there? You should see me reading before the fire. A lot I read!

I jump up from a dream and walk about the room. I am full of energy and strength, and must do something; it turns out to be something I scarcely ever do. I play the piano. Two things are bad. Mrs. Gorple's piano and my playing. The music is so trivial, so sentimental, it is swept away. . . . I have been drawing your head, and got the *boucles* of your hair right at last. *Boucles* is the word, not curls, which suggest only ringlets or a nigger's black moss. Do you know that the lower part of your face isn't right? There's too much will and character in it. I have drawn it as it should be, and you must learn to grow like it; if you do I'll never speak to you again. I shall see you to-morrow on the stage. Belle is going with me; it would have been so marked going by myself, though nicer far. Her comments on Shakespeare are not enlightening, and if she talks of you my nerves will shriek. May Sarah Condon's Desdemona or her looks engage all her attention! On the next day I am engaged to be in the train that reaches Stainforth at— See time-table. Do you want to see me? Do I want to see you? Heaven send this weather lasts! It's hard to leave off talking to you. Time and Mrs. Gorple wait for no man. I am very hungry. If you write, don't send a messenger with "Amphitheatre" in huge letters on his cap and collar.

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**Our correspondence must not be advertised.
Good-bye, Conrad—— Oh, you mustn't kiss me
out of doors!**

Your ever loving

ETHEL.

XLIV

*Castleford,
Saturday.*

MY CONRAD, who wastes his time and mine talking of Othello. No more Shakespeare talk with you. You acted beautifully, but I don't like seeing you as a cruel man. Why did you want so much to know my idea of Desdemona? She's not my sort—not at all like me; you know as much of her as I do. Two reasons made me get out at Stainforth—restlessness, and a wish to see where you lived, and whether you would take me past the house and point it out to me. When we turned into the alley with the high walls of Stainforth House gardens on one side, and on the other a field with one house shut in by trees, my heart said: "This is where he lives." I walked slowly on purpose, and tried to see through the *grille* in the door, and caught only a glimpse of the person in front of a room built away from the house. Did you for a moment think I shouldn't know? Why, the house and scene and place are you. The solitariness, the reserve, the distinction, and the hint of poetry, were you again and again. My compliments on

your acting—it was admirable; where exactly it failed I don't know. Perhaps you let me see that you were holding yourself in hand, doing what you had determined to do. Every minute I expected you to tell me—and you did, oh, man of iron! at the thirteenth lamp-post. Was that the number you had fixed? For some reasons I like your not telling me, for others I don't like it, and I love you because you wanted to.

Sunday is filled—the Whites, friends of my aunt (Gertrude Delapre—in private, Mrs. Rogers), and not, as you thought, my learned friend Mr. Walter Jervis. Did you get wet? The rain here falls suddenly and heavily, as if the bottom of a cistern had been drawn away. You said many things that are nice. To think you have some new looks of mine? At the theatre I mustn't think of you. *Bébé Belle* says I'm either in love or going deaf. I begged her not to mention the alternative, as a kind of intermittent deafness is in our family. This excited her sympathy, and set her talking of her family's complaints, which she is very proud of, because they puzzle the doctors. Mrs. Gorple says it will rain for three weeks on end; it always does at this time of year if it doesn't snow. What shall we do, dear? I shall try the efficacy of prayer. If Monday's wet I can't see you, what with my *matinées* and yours, until Friday.

Oh, but I must, dearest! I can go from Monday to Friday, because one of those days is the day after I've seen you, another's the day before, and on the middle one there's "Othello." But seven days, each longer than the last! I couldn't live through them. That's not true. Seven times seven I could wait if I were to see you on the last of them.

Conrad dear, don't fret and worry yourself about your career. Aren't you in at least as good a position as the stars of to-day were ten years ago? "If," you say, "I don't do something soon, I shall be in ten years' time just where I am." You beg the question, dear, which is wrong. One question you may beg and be right. It is a great joy to love you as I do, and it is many little joys also. As thus—I was thinking of some shopping I had to do, and suddenly I thought "I love Conrad," and my heart sprung forward with a shock of joy.

Your ever loving

ETHEL.

XLV

MY DEAREST,

The Art Gallery was a haven for us: it cannot be a resort. It was good to see you, though it was like seeing one's visitors in the presence of warders! That was in sixpenny seclusion; what will it be on the free days? We are at the mercy of the weather. I had so much to say to you, dear, which could not be said on a public bench with strangers near, or within hearing of the art students. The gloom of the day and place had affected your spirits, and the pictures bored you, I think. Conrad, you care for nothing but the stage; there you begin, there you end. The few pictures you looked at were those that suggested scenes, and you liked the *Mason* as a back-cloth.

I have thought of what you said about telling my mother about our engagement, but you're quite wrong about your being able to see me at my rooms then. Mother would insist on my going to live with the Whites, whom I do not care for. We should see one another still less, and you would be bored with those people. And,

dear, I don't want it known while I am at the Lyceum. You know what a pantomime theatre is. I shudder at the idea of the Semitic ones talking about us. Nor should I like paragraphs in the Castleford papers. They can say what they choose about my acting, but my private affairs are nothing to do with them. We must be patient and meet between the showers. But I'm not patient, and the showers are continuous. Our meeting to-day was a ceremony with maimed rites. I was talking to the transient and embarrassed phantom of Conrad. You've a tell-tale face when it's left to itself; it declares your feelings so plainly. I thought people would notice. They didn't see as much as I did, perhaps. Your eyes did not look happy; you should not have looked so much at me. The Art Gallery is not Rigg Moor.

Please don't say you're not tall enough for me. I do not want a six-foot-three man. It was the hat made me look so tall. Were you very angry because I wouldn't go to Dexters to tea? If we had, we should have been in the evening papers, and the Lyceum and Amphi. would have had something to talk about. You would have risked it as far as you were concerned, but directly I spoke of myself you wouldn't hear of the idea. You don't know how much that pleased me. I've made a reckless man careful because

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he loves me. Write very soon, dear, and put up
a call for fine weather for Friday.

Your *ever* loving

ETHEL.

XLVI

OTHELLO tickets and your sad letter to hand, dear. You must get the seats as often as you can. If I'm always asking, there'll be chatter, and they're sure to put you down as the attraction. With such a (male) cast it's inevitable. Fokes and Armitage would be impossible pretexts; no one would believe me for a moment. Mrs. Gorple is coming with me; she saw Ira Aldridge, or the "Benicia Boy," play Othello; she is not sure which, but he was a black man and hasty tempered.

I am as downcast as you are. The public institutions of Castleford are hopeless. The Museum's rather worse than the Art Gallery. Dear Conrad, when you are looking at palaeozoic specimens you are a perfect statue of dejection. I see the comedy of the situation, and I don't laugh. Conrad, some ironical god is handling us. My patience is running short, and I love you more each day. Good-bye, Heart's Delight; there's your name back again. Sweetheart, good-night. Perhaps you're thinking of me now.

Your always loving

ETHEL.

XLVII

DEAREST,

You need not have excused yourself. I do not hesitate on your account. I put myself in your hands without a second thought; I would trust no other man. That's wrong. I've never thought of trusting you, or not trusting you, any more than I've thought of doing myself an injury, or dyeing the fair brown hair you think so well of. Please, most dear man, never write again like that.

* * * *

Of course, there are other things to consider—the things being people; the only reason for not coming to your rooms is that it would be known. You suggest a way—a prosaic, romantic way. The prose for me, the romance for you; is that it? Your rooms—once a studio, you say—are separate from the house; you sent me a key, I open the alley door, walk a few steps, and I arrive. The risks—that someone in the unfrequented alley may recognise me, that your landlady, Mrs. Yewlett, cannot be relied on. The first is very slight. Mrs. Yewlett is the danger.

She is saving and thrifty, you say, and to be bought. Might she not be bought by other people, too, if need were? She would not see me or know my name. She could if she wanted to, and we should be none the wiser, Conrad. I should not mind her knowing at all if she held her tongue while we're here. After then we announce our engagement, and no one would give Mrs. Yewlett tuppence for her information. The plan is feasible—I will not say tempting. It is tempting, Conrad, and I'm afraid. I will think it over.

Conrad, you are much better—different, I mean—in the scenes with Desdemona, particularly in the first two acts. I am searching for the right word and can't find it, but you seem fond of her; you forget she's Sarah Condon, which you said nothing could make you do. It was actor and actress before, now it's Othello and Desdemona. You made me feel that you loved the woman you were killing, and you didn't give me that feeling the first time I saw you. The people like you; they say you get more out of the part (put more in?) every performance.

Time has flown. Love many times.

Your

ETHEL.

XLVIII

MY DEAREST LOVER,

Just now I feel like a queen who has to sign a death sentence for the first time; worse, indeed, for she does not know the victim, and she's not the victim herself as well. I am not coming to you, dear. I feel safe in telling you that; I know you won't love me any less. A weak and selfish man might, but not a man of strong will and stern character (he is sweet too), in whose strength and firmness I glory. Dear, for these privations you shall be paid a hundredfold! Your key is too big for my envelope, it must go by itself now. It is wrapped in brown paper and tied to a label, and looks as if it were in its shroud. It's made me think our love is dead. I'm taking to omens and presentiments lately. That key fascinated and bewitched me, promising pleasures! There's an instantaneous magic in keys, a telling theatricality! They ask to be used. Rain, always rain! I shall not see you to-morrow; the slightest gleam would send me

to Rigg Haugh—it would rain when I got there.
In fair weather or in foul,

I am your sweetheart true,

Your

ETHEL.

(Gladys is for the programmes and the
public).

XLIX

DEAR MOTHER,

You mustn't let yourself be worried by what the Whites say. I am not ill, I have not been ill, and have no intention of so doing. Very likely I was dull and depressed. Our company, nine performances, and rain that is like rehearsals for the Deluge are not inspiriting. The Whites couldn't be expected to see the immediate cause of my preoccupation. That was their conversation. From one to ten one or other of them talked of money—their own and other people's—of the business, of the dressings and flirtings of their friends. A lot of monkeys crowing over their hoards of nuts were better worth hearing. I'll do as much for money as anyone, it's our sacred duty I know, but I don't care a red cent to talk about it, and my pulse is the same whether Mr. White is an Alderman or a Councillor. The managers are circling around the provinces seeing all the pantos. I've been asked about two operas, and the great Solly Davies, manager for the Folly syndicate, intimated that I was worthy of a niche in the famous temple. Belle introduced me to him, and halloed

my praises like a town crier. Musical comedy only appeals to my lower nature—the love of money. I prefer a dramatic company at half the salary; at least you are an actress and sometimes get a chance of acting. No offers so far. You had what news there is the other day. Kiss St. Cyprian of Nightingale Place many times for me, and don't worry about me, mother dear.

Your affectionate and highly successful daughter,

ETHEL GLADYS.

L

Saturday.

OH, MY DEAR, your reproaches are most just, as well as rather confused and much repeated. Partly I hoped and partly I dreaded to have a letter from you. So my scent betrayed me. Is lavender so distinctive and mine so strong that it saturated your room until an hour after midnight?

Oh, to have heard you say, "Ethel has been here!"

I have no defence, so I will explain. It wasn't my fault. It was the key, in which resides a malignant spirit. I am the slave of the key. It happened in this way: On Thursday, through writing your letter and some others, I drove things rather close. I started in a hurry, got the letters and my new song, and lo and behold, the key had vanished! In wild haste I searched everywhere. The key went on vanishing. I durst not ask Mrs. Gorple or the maid to look for it, or Mr. Conrad Fletcher would have got advertisement at my cost. I had to go, and when I returned there was the packet skulk-

ing under "La Maison Nucingen." I am sure it had crawled underneath. I had put it ~~on~~ the book when I began writing. This time I hung it on the nail of a picture over the mantelpiece, and yesterday it taunted me all day long.

"You've got to post me yourself," it said; "you daren't give me to the servant. Why don't you post me now? It's only ten minutes to the post-office, and you won't get more than wet through. Afraid of catching a cold and letting Margot Binks play your part. Well, I never! Chance it, Ethel Gladys; it'll rain harder soon" (you know it did, Conrad). "What did I tell you? You'll believe me next time? The gentleman I belong to particularly wants a second key. What for? That's no concern of yours. Very well, take me down; go on, take me down. I say, you've not taken me down yet. You're afraid to, because you'd forget where you put me. Last night I was under the French book all the time you were searching, and using words those pretty lips were never made for. Oh, of all the mean tricks! To hide me and write down where you put me. Don't lose the paper, Ethel dear."

Would you believe it, Conrad, a little later Mrs. Gorpel opened the door, and the draught blew the little scrap of paper into the fire, where it perished? At once I got the key out from

under my black toque and hung it up again, and it swung about in fiendish joy.

About three a wet gloom gave place to a dry gloom. Very quickly I put my things on and approached the key-pocket. Its expression was abject; it twisted the string round the nail; it fell from my hand. It knew its hour had come. Going to Cambridge Place a strange idea came into my head. That wasn't the key-spirit's doing. You know, dear, that I am *au fond* a creature of impulse. Most of my impulses are strangled, and people call me sensible. This impulse would have been slaughtered if the key-spirit hadn't been in my pocket. Through that malign influence only the attractions of the impulse came into my head; the objections were not given a chance.

My impulse was to go to your rooms, to see your surprise and to enjoy your delight, and scurry off in two minutes. I remembered that you dined early, and that you cheered your solitude by reading the unactable plays of the unacted. You could not have expected me. I could see your wondering, doubtful, delighted eyes.

Fifty plain objections I could not see.

In such a mood I hurried along the wet and shiny pavements, the way we came back from Stainforth. The rain held off, the clouds in

front of me unpacked, a faint sunset shone in my eyes, and you were very near to me.

The alley was dark; the pools on the flags were white under the black trees. Through the grille of the door I could see a light in one room—yours. I tore the key from the paper; it jumped into the lock, which turned at once. A sound startled me going up the path; it was the flapping of my water-proof. The blinds of your window were down. I tapped lightly, then rather loudly.

“Peradventure he sleepeth,” I said.

There was no answer. I hesitated—tried the outer door—it gave, and I entered. Your door was a little open. I pushed it and went in. The room was empty; there was not a sound to be heard. For a little while I felt disappointed, and stood by the table and wished I had not come. There were flowers in a blue-and-white china jar, the flowers that I had given you from my bouquet days ago. I stooped to kiss them; they were still fresh, and, looking up, I saw your eyes on me. What a good likeness of him! I thought, and all at once the influence of your room came upon me, pressed against me, surrounded me.

Most carefully I turned the gas a little higher and saw the room, and loved it for itself and

for my lover. The furniture, I knew, was sandal-wood. Miss Newsome has some like it; the style is Louis Seize; the moulded panels, with paper of rose-like brocade, all were charming, soothing, gay, and graceful.

You told me it was an artistic room, and, knowing that artistic usually means modern black oak, I had expected a comfortable, stuffy room, brightened with a mahogany chiffonier and wax Cupids under glass on wool mats.

The delightful shock once past, I toured the rooms, picking you up as I went. By-the-by, cigar ends should not be thrown in a fireplace of old marble, where fresh fruit and leaves and one nymph are cut so finely.

The bearskin rug scarcely suits the room.

In the wing-chair was a typed play, open. It is called "The Whirlpool." On the writing-table by the window were several books of "Othello" and a photograph of a pantomime *artiste*. Your ebony stick was on the ledge of the bookcase, which is not the place for a stick. The carving of the bookcase doors is lovely. The dinner-waggon, with medallions on the drawers, is exquisite, but I don't know enough of such things to say whether it is Louis Seize or later. I am glad Mrs. Yewlett has put a baize on the top, which was shamefully littered with odds and ends. Such a funny thing! As I went

round I kept thinking that you were in the room, and once I spoke aloud and said: "Conrad, I wish you would not put pens on a marble mantelpiece." You have the little rosewood-table put next to the wing-chair at breakfast, and at dinner you sit with your back to the glass, and look alternately at my photograph and at yours.

You have a fine collection of French's plays—you read only plays and papers—and I hope you will not forget Mrs. Muriel Thornton's "At Home," Lexington Crescent, W., next Tuesday. Your bronze-amber-velvet coat looks quaint on an easy-chair, and I like your loyalty to the well-worn garment. I sat for a little in the wing-chair, and suddenly remembered that time was galloping. Softly I lowered the gas, lightly I went out (see if I shut the outer door), and quickly I sped down the path, and noiselessly unlocked the alley door and emerged into publicity. I looked at my watch. How long do you think I was in your room? Seven minutes! All the time I never thought of the illegal thing I was doing. What should I have said if Mrs. Yewlett had appeared? She might have called the police in! Don't waste time looking for the wobbly gold collar-stud which used to be on the inkstand. It is in good hands and will be well cared for. C. K. F. (like this) is

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scratched on it—not well scratched. “Knightley” is romantic. Dear, it was lovely to see your room! When I got back the author of all evil was in my pocket—that is, the key! I will see that it is returned to you. Do not repine; your letter is a chapter of lamentations. Remember—absence makes the heart grow fonder.

Your loving caller

ETHEL.

LI

*Castleford,
Tuesday.*

MY DEAR GRACE,

When—and that is often—I get disgusted with the stage, I think of your patient courage in a worse strait. To think that you cannot walk as well as you did a month ago. It is a great disappointment for me. Already I had decided that you were to brighten your big house, and disperse the gloom of Shepherd Street with entertainments as elegant as they were select. I had designs on the Welsh Hus-sars, and, through them, on the élite of Alder-shot. The Hon. Finnies and his able colleagues would have shed their intellectual lustre on the humble Martin relatives (“in trade, Miss Hobson”—the first words your mother spoke to me; the tone rings in my brain)—and perhaps they would have mitigated the aristocracy of the Bohun contingent. Don’t go away before I come back; I so want you to know Mr. Walter Jervis, and he was eager to be introduced to you. Note the “was.” Now he says that, after the way I’ve spoken of you, he doesn’t feel

worthy of knowing you, and that he'll decline on a lower plane. I am the lower plane. He has the entrée here (Watson courts the press), and his indifference to all the other ladies has wounded their feelings. They watch us all the interval. Our second girl, Margot Binks, who, if she prays, prays for my immediate and prolonged illness, pirouettes in our path, and the Semitic Sisters postpone the massaging of the acrobat—a ceremony performed each night in their room. We don't know yet which of them he is engaged to. The other night there were two or three managers in the town searching for talent and a man who finances Watson. He asked them, and one or two of us, to supper at the Fleece. Of course, it was a business supper, and rather a late affair. I wasn't mentioning it to Mr. Jervis, and up comes Miss Margot, yawning and saying:

"Gladys, I wish I was as fresh as you are. Four a. m. takes the starch out of me. Wasn't the champagne beastly last night, Gladys dear?"

"Disgraceful," I said; and she went off to the Sisters, and they burst out laughing, and I was silly enough to get red.

"A good deal of a cat, that young woman," Mr. Jervis said. "Why should she flaunt her supper about? Doesn't often go, I suppose."

"They put her up to it," I said. "They thought I shouldn't like you to know; they're wild because you don't speak to them."

"My dear Miss Luttrell," he said as we passed the Sisters, "I don't care about music-hall people."

Oh, I am loved now!

Mr. Jervis is awfully nice, though you can't believe a word he says. If the thing's possible, I should call him a man of good family, with intellect. He professes pol. econ., philosophy, and psychology, to which, after business hours, he adds the gentle art of spoof. He knew a man named Pater at Oxford, who invented the art of writing English. He has a manner several years too old for him, which is nothing but a low-down trap into which I am perpetually tumbling. The other day he looked so off colour that I asked what was the matter with him.

"One of your sex," he said, with a plucky smile.

"Oh, I'm so sorry," I exclaimed! "Who is she? What has she done?"

"She's my washerwoman, and she hasn't sent my shirts home," he answered, looking as pleased with himself as if he'd discovered the Solar system.

"Mr. Jervis," I said, "you ought to write musical comedy. That's just the sort of thing

the provincial papers call sparkling humour" (accent on provincial, as he's on the *Mercury* here). Owing to that diabolical contrivance of his (applied psychology) you can't score on him, as he dots down everything you say, as illustrating your temperament and character. I told him it was terrible bad manners, and he said he'd sacrificed manners to science long since. "I noticed that ages ago, Mr. Jervis," I said, and, looking over his shoulder, I saw him write down "Repartee rudimentary," whereupon I sent his precious notebook flying into the prompt-box. He saw at once that he'd hurt my feelings, and begged my pardon, and I was fearfully angry with myself for behaving like the sweet child you once knew. Luckily no one saw, and the call-boy brought the book back, and Mr. Jervis said it was an accident; and now we have agreed not to apply psychology, as I'm too sensitive for science. So I have cemented another friendship.

Let me, Grace dear, ere I close my eyes in sleep, warn you against subtlety. What is the mysterious quality that has lately been wanting in my letters? Pardon the stock phrase, but have you been "reading between the lines?" You can always find what you want there. You think my letters betray "preoccupation" and show "deliberate gaiety," that "they lack

spontaneity," that their "tone" causes you misgivings, and that you "have a sense of something being kept back." *Precisez, ma chère*, these distinctions are too fine for me. Accuse, and I will answer, and I shall still be your old and devoted friend,

ETHEL G. HOBSON.

LII

"Dearest, do not blame me. I must be circumspect. I know we have only two days a week, and willingly I would come to you every time. Have I not been? The key is still with me. Already my engagements and unsociability have turned Belle Avondale into the unfamiliar path of thought. Twice have I excused myself from seeing the Royal show with her, and the Wednesday I didn't go to her afternoon tea she heard that I was at the Amphitheatre. She is much *intriguée*. She does not believe in devotion to a dead dramatist. "I'll swear there's something up," she said last night. "If you've got a mash, why don't you own up? I won't put you in the cart. I won't even ask you who it is, though I'll bet you two long drinks I could spot him in three."

Of course you were right not to come to the "Pantomime Ball." As you never go to such things, it would have been noticed, and you'd rather have given us away by your attentions to me, or made me miserable by dancing with others to allay suspicion. I couldn't bear it, Conrad. There are looks and tones of yours which are

mine, and must be kept for me. I won't cry over milk that hasn't been spilt. At the last moment I didn't go, and at one stroke insulted the Corporation of Castleford, enraged my respectable manager, and irrevocably intensified my unpopularity with the other ladies. The Goblin took the matter to heart, and his bloodless face was more than usually snaky and corpse like.

"The gov'nor didn't at all like your not going," he said sepulchrally; "he likes his people to be loyal to the show." I saluted the hoary phrase and Jobbins shook his head. "Ah, Miss Luttrell," he continued, clasping his huge hand, "you'll find it better to keep in with your managers; they can do a lot for you."

"When's Watson done anything more than pay my salary?" I said. "He wouldn't let me take my benefit, would he?"

"That's business," said Jobbins.

"All right, so's this. We'll keep it at that, Mr. Jobbins," I said. "*Do ut des*, as Bismarck said, and he was a business man."

"Why don't you drop a line to the gov'nor, and put the thing right?"

"Because I've not been engaged as a doormat. No one wipes their boots on me," I said, and brought a gleam of life to his dull eyes; but he didn't say anything, as he's going to

have a benefit, and will want me to play for him. Everyone cut the last procession that night, and as they saw me go away in an evening dress, they made sure I was off to the Fleece, instead of which I went to Miss Jervis's children's party, and got there just as they were distributing the presents from the last and finest Christmas-tree. The children were sweet, and shy, and cheeky, and greedy, and generally adorable, and one was like my little brother Cyprian. I recited "The Kerbstone Kid" to him and a pal, and then I had to give it again to the whole crowd, also my pantomime songs and a step-dance. You should have seen how excited the little things got. They clung to me deliciously, and the older ones went about imitating me. It was nicer than being at the Fleece with provincial *viveurs*, music-hall *divettes*, and assorted show-girls. When the babies, large and small, had been sent home wrapped up and packed up (some of them singing "Lend me a Bit to go on with"), we elders had our own festivities. Most of the people were in the University set, but there were some selected Castlefordians as well and a sprinkling of consuls. Mr. Walter Jervis (I may name him?) and his sister were admirable hosts; the viands were delicious, the wines exquisite, the service effective and not obtrusive. There

was smoking in both rooms; they did not expect me to smoke because I'm on the stage, but some unprofessional ladies did smoke, and no one thought it anything out of the way. I went from room to room talking with all and sundry. If they compare notes they will find that Miss Luttrell is much interested in "Othello" and in people's opinion of Mr. Fletcher's acting. All the time I was thinking of you in a little chamber of my brain. It gives me great joy to have you there, to see, feel, and hear everything through that continual thought of you. That is one of the best things of love. You are always with me.

Good-bye, lover mine,

A bientôt Conrad,

ETHEL CONRADINE.

LIII

MY DEAREST,

To-day you said that you had never seen a face as happy as mine. "Etelka, you radiate happiness; you are the glowing core of your own radiance." When I lay back in the wing-chair, and the glow of the fire was on my face, you stared so long at me that you made me smile. "Only that was wanted!" you cried. "Oh, you piece of happiness!"

That was true. I have never been so happy. To-day I feel as if my love had reached its full growth and burst into flower. I am at rest and safe; the fears and doubts have gone; the keen, half-painful joys have given place to confidence and peacefulness. You must not say that I am too much of a fighter ever to be at rest. That's wrong; I only fight for my rights. Concord and amity I love, and people have told me that they took to me on account of my *bonté*, which is something more human than goodness—a profane or secular charity. Perhaps, sometimes, I hurt people's feelings, but that's because with me emotion and expression are simultaneous, which is a physical law that I'm not responsible

for. I will make amends to the Goblin—you shall take a box for his benefit! Here is a strange thing. Just when I'm happiest I keep thinking of all my faults. Not because you've told me of them—you make them out to be charming and delightful—but because I feel that I ought to be much better than I am to get such happiness from my love.

What a day it has been!

Aghast, I was looking at the high snow, watching its unrelenting fall, when two boys enter the street, R. and L. Both have duties. One carries a parcel, the other is a telegraph boy. They have a higher and a common allegiance; they are at one with Nature and at odds with one another. An elemental, joyous instinct urges them to snowball each other. They shriek and shout and laugh, and their bad shots hit windows. Two people are waiting, one for a parcel, one for a telegram. Let them wait. The boys are in their element, where shops and rules don't count. They grapple, roll one another in the snow, rub each other's faces with it, force it down each other's necks. They are nearly run over, but the sympathising driver is tender with them—laughs and encourages them. They part, and a snowball strikes just in front of my face and sticks upon the window. T. 2,564 chases the shop-boy—a victim to

humour, impeded by laughter—who drops his parcel, as infants thrown to wolves. A kick, and it flies high in the air and descends in parts at intervals. “Goal!” shouts one. “Off-side!” says the other, collecting someone’s property—a pair of shoes—large men’s! He wraps them up, and rushes up our steps and rings the bell hurriedly, his eye on the telegraph-boy, who follows him, and knocks like the people in “Macbeth.” Telegram and parcel and a note are for me. The shoes are American snow-shoes, obtained by the unauthorised use of my name, as the note explains. The telegram directs me how to use them. I call the telegraph-boy in and scold him. Voice from passage: “That’s right, miss. Report him; they’re only waiting a chance to sack him,” which makes me laugh, and that puts me on the level of T. 2,564, who thrusts a form and pencil into my hands for the answer. He is enraged by jeers from the street. I tell him to go straight back to the office, and take his number and put the time on the form. He looks at me as if he had misread my character. He goes off, disregarding the shop-boy’s challenges. To Mrs. Gorple’s horror I put my outdoor things on, and have some trouble with the shoes. It seems the right weather for my Astrachan cap. The snow has left off. The collar of my long cloak is turned up. The shoes are

right, and I have Mr. Gorple's Sunday stick.
En avant!

The air is cold and still, the sky low and grey; few people are about; walking is slow when a path has not been trodden, risky where the snow has been dug away. On I toil, attracting attention, women-folk being rare to-day. I get warm and turn my collar down, but I follow the route given me, and reach the half-way point in fair time. The other half is not so long. Sooner than I had hoped the trees of Stainforth come in sight; in a little while I can see the white heaps on the branches, and the powdery snow falling from them. At last the alley fronts me—two white banks with a black line between them. No room for more than one to pass. From the cottage door the snow has been cleared away. I open it, oh! so quietly, and behold! a figure in high boots and an old bronze-amber coat of velvet is shovelling snow away most vigorously.

The rest you know. The best you don't know. I despair of making you know, and yet I want you to so much. Never have you been mine so completely. The snow and the silence shut us in; the world began and ended with your room and your domain, which took in the trees of Stainforth Place to where they met the near sky. Did you mind my laughing at the

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man who made clear the path before me? He was in a hurry to make himself presentable. I like you to look your best for me, but I liked you most when, to please me, you changed to velvet which you say was once amber. Then it was like being in my own home, and perhaps most when you were not talking of me. Of course I love you to talk like that; you do it so well, and you mean it all, and you're not to leave it off till I ask you to—not for years. And the other is nice in a different way. To hear you talk of acting, of what you've done, of what you mean to do, or people you've known, of Gerald Nugent, who did that portrait of you, and of fifty other things, is most delicious, because all the time, without meaning to, you tell me that you love me. Mr. Jervis says that Greek art tried to express the idea by putting it into material that was not natural to it, and so by that means the idea was released and emphasised. I think it's the same with love and common things. They throw it up, as the crowds throw up the leading man, which is Conrad Fletcher. Dear, you're the only actor I could ever believe when he talked of living for his art. You have done what others talk about. You might have been a grand London manager if you had stooped to shopkeepers' methods. I thought I knew something of their ways, but you have

told me much more. That was a lovely story about Phillips and the Countess of Carrickfergus. I'd like to see any countess order me about like that. The Baggs and Quentin affair ought to be printed, and called "The Fight for the Backer." Quentin chasing lords at the Academy dinner would illustrate beautifully. Poor little man! how tired he must have been—and then to be taken for Arthur Richards the music-haller! Hubert, commonly called Long Shanks, posing before a glass to impress the lady novices, and having to find a fresh and blameless syndicate each season to carry him on as Sole Proprietor! And the whole lot of them dancing after royalty, advertising themselves by speeches on Art written by journalists, or tacking themselves on to the stage charities. Conrad, it's like a Balzac novel made visible! I shall tell Mr. Jervis the story of the coins on the poster of Julius Cæsar being prophetically stamped B.C. 44!

I have not yet decided when you're best; but you're most vivid when you're talking about your ideal theatre, talking so fast, arguing with me as if I had opposed you, walking about, gesticulating, leaning against the mantelpiece, frequently lighting your cigarette, and dividing your argument into twelve parts—one for each of my fingers and two for the thumbs! The

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ideal theatre, with a repertoire of the legitimate and modern drama, and no upholstery and no long runs. An old story, Conrad; you could do it if anyone could.

How you believe in the public! Most acting people do. I don't, and the managers' talk about "public" taste, "public" judgment, "public" appreciation of the best, strikes me as bluff and piffle. I don't think that the theatre public care about acting as the musical public care about music. Our people go for the excitement of the piece and situations; they don't care how you get your effects, and they don't know whether the effects are right or wrong, but they do know when they have sensations down their backs! It's an outside chance, Connie, a forlorn hope; but it's better to be killed in a forlorn hope than to live to ninety on an annuity. Each time I love your artist room more and more. Please thank Mr. Gerard Nugent for a friend (no need to mention names) who is very grateful for his kindness in getting you such a lovely place. When we're married I'll thank him myself.

Conrad, I'm not easy about Mrs. Yewlett. Can she be trusted? Are you sure she is not the woman who spoke to me in the alley the last time, or why did she have that thick veil on? She must know someone comes. Perhaps it isn't

wise to wash the cups up; it shows your visitor's not a man.

I will not spoil a lovely day with regrets. It was good from end to end, right up to our dinner in the deserted restaurant, where the waiter told us that Mr. Fletcher was grand as Othello, though his own taste was for the Sisters Lawson at the Lyceum, Gladys Luttrell, no takers! Receive, dear sir, the consideration of my distinguished assurance.

ETHEL GLADYS LUTTRELL-HOBSON.

I love you very much, Conrad. Wasn't sure I'd mentioned it.

E.

LIV

Dressing-room,
L. T. C.

MY OWN DEAREST MOTHER,

We go on for three, perhaps four, weeks. I am writing every day for something to follow, and, after my success here, I am standing out for better terms with any musical piece. With a dramatic company, which is preferable, I'd go for less. I'm half inclined to wait in London on the chance of something at a comedy theatre. With pieces crashing every week there ought to be an opening. Belle has persuaded herself that Solly Davies will find room for me at the Folly. I am not so sanguine. The Whites are very kind, and I've got used to them; but I don't care to be asked to their house, and then taken to some strangers' house in the evening and shown off as a tame actress. I refused the last time, and came home and talked with Mrs. Gorple, who has taken a great fancy to me. A shrewd old lady, who likes a gossip, but doesn't chatter outside. It seems that someone—an admirer—has been inquiring about me. Mrs. Gorple didn't tell him much. She laughed as

she said: "Mr. Gorple always says no one can make me talk against my will, and he's right, my dear; so you can make yourself easy on that matter."

I long to see you all and my native London, which I see so little, and the famous London actors. But I suppose it will end in the old provincial round. I am glad the girls are helping you more. Aren't you glad now that you couldn't do as Tom wished? Father chose the trustees wisely. If his Pamela Vansittart is the lady I know, I wish him a happy issue out of his troubles. Love to all, and most to my young saint.

Your loving daughter,

ETHEL.

LV

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Now I think I've said enough of my reasons for not coming to you on a Sunday, let alone that I can't, being fixed up. No more on that point. You understand, don't you, dear?

There is something much nearer my heart that I've wanted to tell you a long while; but you're so sensitive that I feared to give you pain, and, dear, I was afraid of offending you. But it doesn't seem right for me to be afraid of you, Conrad. After all, perhaps it isn't very much, except that it concerns you, which makes it very much indeed. Dearest, it is this: you are not as happy as you ought to be, as I want you to be. I think you are too solitary, too—not self-centred, but concentrated on ideals and ambitions that may never be realised. You get engrossed in your own thoughts, you brood and desire ardently, and, your desires not being granted, you get bitter and gloomy. You feed on your soul. You should not live so much by yourself. Take things more lightly. A wise and good man (Mr. Jessey) says that a cheerful spirit is our duty to ourselves. No one

can be brighter and more joyous than you, Conrad, when you slip your pack for a little while. I am not asking you to give up your dreams. I believe that of such baseless fabrics great deeds are made, such as yours will be, I feel sure. But one should not be always on the strain; we should be masters of our own ambitions. We are greater than they. You are worth more than a regenerated drama. So, dear, I want you to be less solitary, not to live a life so secluded and apart. Mix with other men, and women too. Perhaps they are not up to much, but they have the distinction of being our fellow-creatures. You and I may speak our minds about the profession, but we know that actors and actresses (music-hall people?) are as good as anyone else. People inside any profession can, among themselves, be very severe. Long ago I had my faith in doctors destroyed, and you know something about parsons. I don't know any architects, but I expect they're no better than the rest of us. But I'm not prescribing actors for you. Associate with your fellow-men, take them as they come, and you'll go back to your ideals rested and strengthened. And I shan't lie awake thinking you're not happy.

Your loving sweetheart,

ETHEL.

LVI

DEAREST,

Neither your talk nor your letters have satisfied me. I am very fearful about you. I imagine awful things. You should have gone to your friends in the country. . . . Conrad, I will break my rule, and come to you for a little on Sunday evening. I shall leave my friends about seven. I have no rest for thinking of you. In haste,

ETHEL.

LVII

MY OWN CONNIE,

Your letter of rapture was very dear to me, and it hurt me very much that I had to burn it. If anyone else had seen it! You think only of yourself, Conrad. Never mention my coming to you last night in any of your letters. You've recovered your spirits; mine are not so good. I am haunted by the thought that our marriage will be prevented in some horrible way. I don't mean that, Conrad. It comes to me of itself. No; we won't be married here, but directly I get back to London. You can arrange everything before I come up. Mother will not like the secrecy, but there's no help, and I must break it to her. Very well, Rigg Moor tomorrow. Doesn't it remind you of "Act IV., same as Act I.?" I must not come to the cottage again. When I got to the end of the alley last night a woman was watching there. This time I, too, had a thick veil. It was as well you did not come with me. Shall I tell you how much I love you? Conrad, you know better than any words can tell you! Oh, now I do love you! More, yes, more, and so differently!

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I must stop, or I shall write things which I did not know I could speak. I could play Juliet now. Rigg Moor to-morrow.

Your

ETHEL.

LVIII

Tuesday Night.

DEAREST MINE,

In one way you were right in wanting me to come to you. Rigg Moor is not the place for mixing love and business. And you are so reckless. You nearly lost that telegram. I see you chasing it now. This news has bewildered me. It means that I lose you a week earlier. It will be a lonely fortnight. You do not seem as glad as I am that your dreams are about to be realised. You put me first all through; this grand and sudden chance of management is second to me: I noticed that, and loved you for it. You must not miss the chance: you must go, whether the Amphi. people get V. K. Nicholson or not; I would not have you lose this for worlds. I am dying to know who is the "leading member of the profession" that is to be your partner. It's not another actor, that's certain. Perhaps it's A. H. Ferguson, the acting-manager; he's been hankering after management a long time. He got up the St. George syndicate for Quentin, and perhaps he's got one for himself now. If they say you must

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bring some money in I will ask all my rich friends. I have three—Miss Newsome, Mr. John Higgs, and Miss Grace Martin—and if I can get anyone to advance me something on my (small and distant) share of Glover's, I will do it. Friday is our last day; let it be at Rigg Moor. Write to me if you hear anything more, especially about the partner.

Your loving, half-sad

ETHEL.

LIX

Sunday Morning.

MOST DEAR CONRAD,

How well you arranged getting Nicholson to play last night, so that you left quietly, with only me to see you off. You should not have said I was glad you were going, even in fun. You know I am not, but I'm delighted that you've got your chance, and I'm going to be very proud of you and your success; you will succeed, dear—my heart tells me that. What a long while we paced that platform! Some of the people recognised you, and I gained a secondary lustre. I enjoyed every moment of that walk, though there was sadness waiting in my heart. Dearest, you were not as hopeful as you should have been. I was the cheerful one, though no one asks me to be a partner in a West-End management! Are you going to engage me? Dear, you mustn't take this business with such depressing seriousness, or you'll get one of your long fits of morbidness. Of course it's business, and must be treated as such, but please don't let it crush out all your gaiety and good spirits. Write to me every day, a

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short letter if you've not time for a long one—
not always a short one, though.

To-day I lunch with Belle and retrieve many
promises to the Jervis's in the evening. I do
not want to be by myself and get to thinking.
Good-bye, dearest; tell me all about to-day's
interview. I imagine you talking to the other
men. Would you were here to kiss me.

Ever and always your
ETHEL.

LX

Lyceum, C'ford, Tuesday.

Delighted to get your letter, even by the late post. This is only a postscript to the real letter, which I was keeping back. Your letters of love are good now; you've lost the shyness which came over you when you wrote, but not when you spoke. More love than business, dearest; the other would have been more welcome, but I'll be patient. These delays always happen. So the veiled partner is Mrs. Palgrave Robinson, the Australian star. I remember she was talked of when I was a child. Of course you will insist on your position; you're not going into management to make anyone else. People are asking why you disappeared so suddenly. There are many explanations, mostly discreditable to you. The chatter amuses me, the only woman who can keep a secret. Our notice is not up yet. I'll telegraph you directly it is up, and you can arrange for our marriage at the registrar's. Love in haste.

Your very
ETHEL.

LXI

MY DEAREST CONRAD,

You don't write very often. I watch the post-man pass. I won't complain or worry you when you are so much troubled about your own affairs. So Ferguson is the man, after all, and it's Mrs. Palgrave Robinson's money chiefly. There isn't much to choose between the Sheridan and the St. Georges. Old Quentin's let the St. Georges down very much, with his eternal novelette aristocrat, like nothing on the earth below or in the waters under the earth.

To-day I am rather dull and out of spirits. Not, dear, because you want the marriage delayed a little. I know you are as eager as I am; you first thought of it and suggested it to me. But I would rather it were not put off beyond the last date you mention.

No, I've been upset by something else. I was walking, and my feet know one route here better than any other. I had determined not to see the Cottage again till my last day here, but when the alley asked me to enter it I went down.

The door of the garden was open, the slabs of the mantelpiece were stacked against the wall,

the satin-wood of the bookcase shone in the sun, and the wing-chair looked sad and forlorn on the grass. A workman told me that everything was being sent to London. He let me come in the garden, and I walked about touching the dear things, and saw the dent your ring made in the writing-table that day; you remember? The sight saddened me. I would rather have seen the place empty and desolate. It is so different, so lonely, now you're gone, and perhaps it's made me nervous and a little anxious. This is enough complaining. It's new with me; since I loved you I've felt things more.

Always love,

ETHEL.

LXII

MY DEAREST,

“Write that I may know thee.” I know you so well, and yet your letters tell me more of you. It’s so like you to live in the moment, whatever that moment may hold—a triviality or a great matter. Now it’s the Sheridan, a little while ago it was me. Oh, I’m not saying you’ve at all forgotten me or love me less. Only I’m not before your eyes. If I could appear before you this very minute you would forget everything else. Have you not forgotten something that gravely concerns me—something even more important than the Sheridan Theatre! It is a fortnight since our notice was up, and you’ve done nothing in that matter. Oh, I hate to speak of it to you! I do not think I should have to. I am much alone, and think a great deal, and one thought comes and frightens me, and I get haggard brooding on it. I don’t yield to it. I reject and loathe it for your sake.

The papers have been talking of Mrs. Palgrave Robinson. I see she is a Mrs. Thornton. Is she the Mrs. Thornton whose card was on your writing-table the day I came when you

were out? It was not there afterwards. They say her husband is something or other in the Leeward Islands, wherever they may be. There's a good deal more fuss about her than you. Are you going *piano*? May it mean *lontano*, dear. An engagement at the Folly threatens. It is not a theatre I much esteem, nor, things being as they are (or soon will be), would you perhaps like me to be there. What do you advise? It seems odd to me to ask anyone's advice about my engagements. It may be strange, but I like it. Counsel me, dear Conrad, and allow in reading this for a woman who is alone against her will. Soon a long farewell to Castleford, a last look at Rigg Moor, and then "hame to my ain countree," which is London, where the bad actors go.

Your always loving,
 ETHEL.

P.S.—They're not all bad.—E.

LXIII

153, Shepherd Street, Park Lane.

Oh, my dear Conrad, how I jumped when I saw you at Willesden! Weren't you surprised to see me in nearly solitary grandeur in a first-class compartment? I say nearly solitary because the blind gentleman doesn't count as an ordinary passenger. He was very nice, and said my voice showed good blood and good nature. After I had read and talked to him, and told him I was a working girl, he said, "Yes, you're on the stage," which astonished me, and I astonished him by saying I'd been playing in pantomime. "It's not a pantomime voice or way of speaking," he said. Thinking that only Grace would meet me, I asked him to tell me what my friend was like by hearing the voice; and when you and Grace were talking I asked him what he thought, and he was wonderfully right about Grace, but your voice was beyond him. "I shouldn't like to say," was all I could get out of him.

Isn't Grace altogether and utterly exquisite, in spite of her having had a father who made half a million in trade, which is a continual grief

to her mother, who, if you come to think of it, is really the responsible party. She's the lady who prophesied (per the stars) evil to me from Sagittarius and Capricorn. You're connected with the archer, I suppose, through his arrows, Fletcher from *flèche*, you know. I tremble!

Dear, I'm glad the gentleman was blind. If he'd seen my face when you came to the door! All my sadness left me, and happiness rushed through me in waves; and I have the feeling still, only the waves have quieted, and it's a steady flowing stream now.

I was so glad you came. You were right to know that I shouldn't mind your being there when Grace was coming. When may I tell her? You didn't say very much; your brow was a little clouded. Have you any serious trouble? When am I to see you? Write to me here. I am staying with Grace till she leaves for France. I want to show you Hyde Park. Tell me what is troubling you and ease my heart. I keep myself free for you—London and Conrad! Great joy! Castleford does not exist. Yes, a meeting on Rigg Moor has saved it. Love.

Always your
ETHEL.

LXIV

Shepherd Street.

Now that I am in London I do not see much more of you. Only that one walk in my park. You, poor wanderer of the provinces, don't know it any more than most Londoners. In the unfrequented hours and the retired places it is very sweet and restful. It is full of pictures which no one paints, full of changes of the day and season which no one sees. It is not a rival of Dartmoor or the Forest; but those are professionally picturesque places—they are in the trade. London has other things to do, but all over her estate there are patches of country put down with an easy, careless gesture that seems to say, "You want some country? Here it is! I can do country as I can do anything else."

I've spent hours with Cyprian in the Park, and amused him by pretending that the Park was mine; and when he wanted to know how other people came there I used to tell him imaginary paragraphs from the papers:

"In accordance with her usual custom, Miss Gladys Luttrell Hobson has kindly allowed the residents of Park Lane and the neighbouring

districts to use the Stanhope Gate parade during the present season from 5 to 8," and—

"By permission of Miss Gladys Luttrell Hobson, suburban trippers will be admitted into the Park on Sunday after church and before early dinner."

"Miss Gladys Luttrell Hobson and her brother, Master Cyprian Hamish Hobson, walked in the Park yesterday, and sailed a boat on the ornamental water. In consequence of a sudden gale, the little craft failed to make the opposite shore, and was carried past the island in the direction of the Long Water. It was, however, rescued by one of Miss Luttrell's keepers. Miss Luttrell wore her lovely new heliotrope grenadine and Duchesse hat."

Cyprian used to get angry because the papers didn't mention how he was dressed. The gardeners were all mine, and we fed the fat pony regularly.

So when you came with me the other day you were being introduced to my Park.

How would our being married at once affect you in business? I cannot understand, but I would rather wait till the piece is out, and tell my people, and have a quiet wedding. The papers need not know. You've been very quick about the whole thing, and I do hope John Smith's play will be a hit. I like Smith; he's

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enthusiastic and plucky, and he doesn't set up or pose as a teacher on the strength of ideas imported from France and Norway. I loved "St. Michael and all Angels"—the only modern play with real passion in it. Mind our stalls are kept. Telephone if you can come or get an hour to spare unexpectedly.

Your loving
ETHEL.

LXV

DEAREST,

All my congratulations on your splendid success. You were admirable, perfect, adorable. The notices are not half good enough. I wish you would not make love on the stage just as you do—elsewhere. Mrs. Palgrave Robinson must have been handsome when she was young. Her dresses were beautiful, and deserved their success. She acted well, I thought, but Grace thinks she's hard. Everyone was asking what the joint management meant. "Mrs. Palgrave-Robinson and Mr. Conrad Fletcher." It's a silly question; there's no reason why an actor and actress should not be business partners. People are so ready to imagine things. I longed to come behind and say a word to you. It seemed that I was no more than the other strangers in the house. You'll be free now; the piece will run. Come soon, write sooner. I have no engagements. I must settle soon about the Folly.

Your loving,

ETHEL.

LXVI

Shepherd Street.

When the man said it was you, Conrad, I was overjoyed, and had hard work to prevent myself from running down to you. I thought we should have a glorious walk and talk in my park.

We talked enough—or you did; but it wasn't the talk I had expected.

I have thought over what you said, and now I tell you that you've no right to ask me to wait any longer. Have I not waited? You give no real reason, nothing but vague and round-about pretexts. "At the end of the season," you say—"three or four months."

It's easy for you to talk. Have you forgotten? I have not.

You did look at the matter practically. Management has made you practical very quickly. Where was the enthusiast of the Cottage?

More than your words, it was your tone that hurt. "Is this Conrad speaking of me?" I asked myself. "Has a few weeks of success done this for him? Is everything that is fine and noble in him to be sacrificed to what he calls

ambition? That's rather too big a word for theatrical management!"

Think it over, dear, and—I should not have to ask it—think of me.

Listen, dear, since you said it's so important you should not be known to be married, let us, as we first intended, be married privately, and then, after the season's over, we can announce it. Write directly, dear. I must see you again soon. We were at the Sheridan last night. How well the part fits you! I was glad to see a full house. Answer quickly, dear. Your talk has made me unhappy. I love you, Conrad.

Your

ETHEL.

LXVII

(*To Conrad Fletcher.*)

It's hard to write to you now, Conrad. The words I am used to come of themselves, and I have to stop myself from using them. A formal dignity is the becoming style for a woman in my position—it strikes me as theatrical—we have had enough theatricals. Two days since I saw you at the Sheridan. All that time I've been living in a sort of *folie lucide*—every sense heightened and everything I see strangely defined, every sound tense and sharply distinct. The feeling came upon me as I stepped from your warm room, with its coloured light, into the bleakness and rawness of the street.

I had seen such a fearful sight, the degradation of a nature. You were astonished at my patience; you expected some outbursts; you seemed to wait for your cues. The wrong you have done to me could not speak; I was aghast at what I saw. Layer by layer the sheath of your soul was stripped away. You don't know how it hurt me to see you as you are. You have not left me a shred of comfort, nor any hope of illusion.

From the opening of pathetic affection to the close, in justified selfishness, I followed you through pretexts and hypocrisies, through airs of sentimental regret and displays of man-of-the-world wisdom. I wondered (or should have wondered if I had not known you) at the natural way in which you spoke the phrases of a resigned and tolerant prudence.

We are both actors. You needn't have acted to me. I wished that I did not see through it all so clearly, or that you had imagined the situation more accurately. Why, did you not know that a woman who has loved a man would give anything rather than see him falsify and bemean all her impressions, all her memories of him? You should not have made that mistake, Conrad. Where were all your phrases and fencings and hedgings against the question, "When will you marry me?" There was no answer. In a month, in six months, in a year? No; you could not specify a date beyond "some time."

You need not have mentioned Mrs. Palgrave-Robinson. I have nothing to do with her; my affairs do not concern her, and she has no claim on me. I had to deal with you, not with her.

Why did you get angry and adjure me to consider your position, your great chance, your ambition, and refuse to explain how they would be affected by marrying me?

There is a reason, and if it's such a strong one, it could have been given. I told you not to consider my feelings. I was prepared for anything, but you never gave that reason. I don't know it now. It is not a matter that should be left to my imagination. I have a right to be told. You can break with me, of course, with or without reasons, but when you refer to an imperative reason, you are bound to give it.

You gave me the impression that you were acting under compulsion, that you still love me; that ambition by itself would not have made you act as you did. More than once you wavered and forced yourself back on the appointed path. I do not say this from vanity. I forget what I said to you; it wasn't half what I felt, and it wasn't what you expected. Evidently, you expected violent speech, upbraidings, denunciations, and the language of a pantomime girl. All through, you were strangely wrong about me. I have nothing to say against pantomime girls, but I do not belong to the class, if it is one. You appear to have laid yourself out for "a row with a girl." The matter is much more serious than that.

Don't you understand what the happiness of a woman who loves, as I have loved you, is worth? You know, or should know, my disposition. Have you ever heard of any love

affairs of mine? Haven't you often praised my fastidiousness? What has it brought me? I loved you, and I shall never love anyone else, and I love you still. The women who, like me, can love only one man are either the happiest or the most miserable. What a life is before me, always; whether I am successful, or famous, or not, I shall have a ceaseless regret. I shall have missed the best thing in life. I am nineteen—that's young; there's a lot of time to come. This thing will not kill me. I can work for myself; there are other pleasures—perhaps there is another happiness—and I may have them, but I shall not have the one I wanted.

You have done me a great injury. I am afraid that it will make me bad. I don't want to be hard and selfish (thank Heaven that is not natural to me), and I shall try not to be, and my great help will be to remember that once you were good and kind to me. Very likely you are not worth loving or regretting. Worth has so little to do with such matters. Conrad, I have seen your nature, and still I love you, and could forgive you and be your wife, and forget, or pretend to forget, and shut off the truth with a veil of illusion. I would put together again the Conrad of my dreams. I would build up a false and beautiful Conrad, and should be very careful only to look at him

through the veils of illusion. I should be happy then, not as I hoped to be when I believed in you, but happier than I shall be without you.

After all, Conrad, it would only be a little more added to the cloud of deceit which has surrounded me from the first. Looking back, I cannot separate truth from falsehood. I cannot tell whether your moods were genuine or assumed for a purpose. I hope some of them were true. You could not have been acting all the time. I know you weren't when you were speaking of yourself. Some of your speeches come back with a new meaning. I see that you are to speak at the Histrionic Charities Dinner, and that you are to read a paper on "The Personal Element in Drama" to the Stoke Newington Dramatic Club. I remember what you said about that kind of thing. No doubt it was one of your speeches *d'occasion*. It would have been nice to have been able to believe in the Castleford time. All its radiance is not gone; I was unhappy when you left, eager and exulting when I came back; those times are dear to me. I will keep them and believe in them, and they will be a help to me.

I shall not write to you again, and you must not write to me, except to say one thing. I feel that you are being put to the test, that by your action now you will show yourself as you

are. Even now I can hope a little, for I know that there is goodness in you, and I pray that it may prevail against the strong will that is always on the side of your weakness. For I love you, dear, and I want to get you back as you were when you began to love me.

I see Othello on Rigg Moor.

ETHEL.

LXVIII

Nightingale Lane, Piccadilly, W.

MY DEAREST GRACE,

I can never tell you what your kindness and sympathy have done for me. More than ever I am grateful for your friendship. No one but you knows, or ever will know, what I have gone through. You say that you will not refer again to that subject, and no doubt you are right. I am inclined, as in those first wretched days, to think of nothing else, and at first I did not like your advice, and it will be hard to follow. I've never known a woman with so much feeling and so little sentimentality, and because I am the same way myself we get on so well together. But our likeness soon ends, or we should get tired of one another. Sometimes I think you are cold, and I long to make your blood run faster, till I see that you are feeling, and that the feeling is influencing the intellect which controls it. My way is to keep them separate, to take them neat, but it's safer to mix.

As usual, I come round to your opinion. There is no wisdom in keeping the wound green. It will remind me of itself. There is a pain, a

regret, and a deprivation that I am to feel throughout my life. It's rather like being told you've only one lung; you're not likely to forget it, and certainly you needn't talk about it.

* * * * *

The Folly engagement has begun well. The dailies have not noticed that Miss Chose has succeeded Mdlle. Telle. It couldn't be expected of them. Still, I have done well. Those ambassadors of immortality, the interviewers, have sought me out, and have described my looks in terms which would be excessive for Helen of Troy. My likenesses have every quality except resemblance.

My song goes well, my dance is encored; I am engaged for twelve months, and the management are pleased with me. I dress with Belle Avondale, and associate amicably with the other ladies. I have received invitations to every meal from gentlemen I don't know, which I have not accepted, and some bouquets which I have accepted, and lost the addresses of the senders.

Miss Newsome is with us, and I am in daily attendance. Mother was saying something about my being out of spirits or overworked, but Miss Newsome wouldn't have it at all. She treats me as a woman now, and the first time we were alone she said, "So you've grown up, my dear."

I'm sorry I've a tell-tale face, but I know how Miss Newsome looks at life, and though I'm quite sure she has guessed, it doesn't trouble me at all; she likes me just as much, and nothing could make her so *inconvenante* as to let me see that she knew. The other night she came to me at the Folly, and discussed the theatre, and the piece, and the company at supper with mother and me in her sensible matter-of-fact way. Mother is rather too fond of apologising for the profession, and said something about nicer theatres than the Folly, which aroused Miss Newsome.

"The theatre don't matter," she said; "an actress is an actress, and must be supposed to have made up her mind when she took to the stage. The piece was too long, and sometimes dull. Gladys was excellent, bright and graceful and *distinguée*, and if she can get a good salary and a long engagement at the Folly she would be a fool not to take it. Now, Gladys is not a fool by any means, and quite able to deal with the *soupirants* of the Folly *foyer*. Haven't they a *foyer*? Well, they ought to have. It's an admirable school of manners. Gladys, who was the jolly woman with the large mouth?"

Mother never will understand Miss Newsome. Please, dear, do not forget that Mr. Jervis

may be at Neuville at the same time as you, at the *Lion d'Or*. He made such a short call that even your insight may not have discovered his merit. Would you, to please me, find out from him who are the people that can help his sister's *fiancé* to get some Government appointment? You may know some of them. I want to get Miss Jervis married.

Your loving friend,

E. G. HOBSON.

P.S.—On Sunday I went to hear Mr. Jessey. He said that when he was thinking over his sermon he was moved to testify for the moral law, which was the Divine law, too. You know how simply, passionately, and sincerely he speaks. To-day he confessed his belief in those abstractions and empty names, justice, mercy, long-suffering, and loving-kindness. It was an act of adoration. For the first time he did not touch me or make me respond to his feeling. I admired, enjoyed, and criticised the beauty of his faith and speech. And I pitied him. He was so utterly deceived, so far from fact. It was pathetic to see that he believed literally in such things. He is like the enthusiast who believes that the world is flat, or those who expect each day the second coming of Jesus.

LXX

*Nightingale Place, W.
Wednesday.*

DEAR LORD HENRY,

Oh dear no! I've no conscientious scruples about supping with my friends, only half an hour's notice is scarcely enough. It will give me great pleasure to come with you to the Cecil on Friday and hear all about the old regiment. I saw you were at Hounslow, and have slept in confidence ever since. The other day I met a corporal of yours in the street, and the pale-blue uniform recalled the happy hours of childhood. But I do think the Royal Welshers' clothes are too pretty for men. The corporal's swagger filled Pall Mall, and he wouldn't so much as notice a non-com. of the 2nd Life, which is quite a respectable corps. Yes, our piece is awful rot; but it's the kind of rot the public like, and, as for the writing, surely you didn't expect literature!

I will meet you at the Cecil; you might send me the number of the table.

Yours sincerely,

GLADYS LUTTRELL.

LXXI

Nightingale Place.

DEAR CAPTAIN DUCIE,

HAVE I refused either to lunch, dine, or sup with you? I do not know what it can mean, except that I wasn't hungry. It's the fault of the stars—they're always "agin" me, and that's shown by my being engaged on the rather distant date you now suggest; for, though I am not "booked," it is Quinquagesima Sunday, and it's against my principles to dine out on Quinquagesima. Still, as we are so fortunate as to have some common friends, we shall no doubt meet again as we have done lately. As Lord Henry says it's my duty to posterity, I am sitting to Mr. Adrian Sylvester for my portrait. He has done some black-and-white studies, which I think very good and have accepted, which is polite for annexed. Mr. Sylvester is not satisfied with them, and despairs of expressing my distinctive *ethos*. But he has begun in oil, and I hope to have the private view in Hounslow Barrack-yard ere long. My congratulations on

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**your appointment at the Horse Guards ; perhaps
we could have the show there?**

Yours very truly,

E. G. LUTTRELL.

LXXII

Nightingale Place.

DEAR MR. FINNIES,

I am glad to hear that you have for the time being ceased to lie abroad for your country's good. Of course I know that you must feel your failure, though you put a good face on the matter; and I fully believe that if war between us and the Republic of Ecuador could have been worked, you would have done it. Anyhow, you went precious near it—you can have a *proxime accessit*. Delimiting frontiers is only adjusting estate boundaries on a large scale, and, if I remember rightly, your family was pretty successful in a case in Berkshire, also in acquiring other people's trout! I presume that I shall be right—judging by the tone of your reference—rather in congratulating you on the loss of your relatives than in expressing a sympathy that might be maladroit, and would certainly be insincere.

“Has the epidemic begun?” you ask. As your relatives were nearer ninety than eighty, the epidemic is *un peu en retard*. It looks more like the halting justice of the antique gods.

Your people remind me of those unlucky families in the Greek plays who were pursued by Fate or Furies for the crimes of their ancestors. It struck me that the ancestors had the best of the deal. I am inclined to think that the present-day Finnies are harassed by the Fury who represents the malversation of public funds, which you told me was one of the achievements of the eighteenth Lord Glastonbury. I trust the vengeance of the god will be slaked ere it reaches the younger and more innocent representatives of that crime-stained family. And I rejoice that the latest victims have promoted you, and not Captain Ducie. You would be an exemplary peer, and then you could cut diplomacy, and I should be less anxious about my investments. I see that you think that supper at the Carlton is a good way of renewing a friendship. I can give no opinion until after the event, and will be there to-morrow night as soon as I am released from my duties.

Always yours sincerely,

E. G. HOBSON.

P.S.—The enclosure refers to a gentleman who is a candidate for the scientific appointment therein named. I can answer for his superiority over all his rivals, because he is engaged to a friend of mine. So I want you to

use the great Glastonbury interest in his behalf. I should think it very kind of you to help me to bring off the double event. Perhaps I trespass upon your good-nature, but you know I am rather liable to trespass.

E. G. H.

LXXIII

Nightingale Place, W.

DEAR MR. JEEVIS,

It will give me a peculiar pleasure to lunch with you at your club. There will be a delicious sense of being where one ought not to be. You know that I haven't any sense of obligation, and that my inclination towards law is to break it, which is the attitude of all healthy and uncorrupted hearts. Grace said that she had met you, and I want to talk to you, firstly, about Edith and Dr. Ramond's chances; and, particularly, I want your impartial opinion of Grace and your enthusiastic appreciation of all that she is, does, says, and thinks. I was sorry to miss you when you called yesterday. My mother has been won by your interest in children, and I have another instance of the value of applied psychology. It seems the key to all hearts. Heaven help us if it got into the hands of unscrupulous men.

Yours very sincerely,

GLADYS LUTTRELL.

P.S.—How does one get into a man's club? Does one ring the bell or knock? Miss Avondale tells me the great thing is to look out for the police.

G. L.

LXXIV

Glover's.

MY DEAR 'STACE,

Note the superscription, "To be read before any others." I will *not* (*fortissimo*) dine with you to-morrow. Not by no manner of means! What you will do is to get into a cab at Euston and drive here straight away. See! there is a room for you, swept and garnished, and there you will stay until you've got a place to your liking.

The idea—the bare idea of my guardian, champion, and accomplice going to an alien hotel! You mustn't think that your friends will not forgive your going to America and producing a play of your own. Why Mr. 'Stace, I am hungering and thirsting for sight of you, so long it is since I saw the friend of my green, unknowing youth. I used to think you awfully old, 'Stace, because you hid that boyish heart of yours under a grave demeanour. It was a great comfort to have you to go to when all Constantine's company were demanding my head and waiving the charger. Do you remember my sending the wrong bill to one of the towns, and

the dire results that ensued? I have much to tell you, and I have to thank you for many papers in the American tongue; but your letters, Mr. Talbot—oh, they were not worthy of you in number or in length! All the same, I rejoiced in what the papers said about “The Dewy Eve,” and, of course, guessed at once that, as usual, you’d been writing over your audience. How long will it take you to learn the difference between what is good enough for the public and what is too good? Will “The Dewy Eve” be done here? I would love to play in it for you.

There’s a friend of mine staying here, a fine specimen of the country gentleman caught in his fastness in Berkshire. He’s not the stage type at all, nor the front-page-of-a-company-prospectus sort either. He is not Geoffrey Vavasour, Esquire (Squire Vavasour), as in the programmes. His name is Higgs, which is English and older, and I call him Mr. John. He thinks that nothing human is alien from him, but I don’t know whether that includes acting-managers.

Aunt Gertie said they met you in St. Louis, and that you behaved beautifully to the baby. You’ve got to tell us all about them and that baby, and you’ve not begun well by saying “he or it” has violet eyes. Violet eyes belong to “she”—that was a slip of yours. ’Stace, you

shall tell me all about her. In my press-cutting book I have a description of a child's grey eyes, which had many opposite qualities. They were "soft," and "fiery," and "gay," and "mournful." That's past—violet's the only wear.

Oh, I had forgotten! Here are your riding orders. Mother will say: "Mr. Talbot, I want you to tell me exactly how you think Ethel's looking." You will say, "I think she's looking very well, just what I'd expected, and as bright and happy and as much pleased with herself as ever." Mind you put that last bit in; it'll sound so natural. My people have got the idea that I'm ill and dull, and when Mr. John saw me he confirmed them by saying, "Miss Gladys, I didn't know you! What's happened?" And then he stopped, for usually he has tact; but he was surprised, because he likes me. You understand, don't you, 'Stace? This is not an elaborate way of telling you that I've lost my looks. They are as they were. The eyes are still grey. Keep yourself free to-morrow. I have a stall for you at our place.

Yours affectionately,

GLADYS.

LXXV

Folly Theatre.

DEAR LORD HENRY,

It's most kind of you to interest yourself so much about Dr. Ramond. I will come to supper at Theodore's with you and Schwartzenhagen *filis*, and hope that he will get his influential papa on our side. My rule against accepting casual invitations can be suspended for business, and occasionally for tried and helpful friends. It's very useful in keeping off outsiders.

G. L.

P.S.—Lest I forget, don't ask Captain Ducie to help in this matter.

G. L.

LXXVI

Nightingale Place, W.

DEAR CAPTAIN DUCIE,

It seems to me that you introduced the subject upon which we differed at lunch yesterday for my benefit, and perhaps, according to your ideas, for my advantage. Major Melladew, whose guest I was, evidently didn't like that subject, even in its historical dress, being discussed before a lady at the kind of theatre with which it is most connected. Consequently, I could not speak as plainly as I wanted to. I can now. You told us that Sir Ronald Bates had married Miss Phemie Calthorp, with whom he had been living. You said that a man of his class should not marry a woman of hers, and you expressly declared that the question of character had nothing to do with it. You defended and applauded the practice of eighteenth-century France and England, which (you were at some pains to point out) forbade marriage between the *noblesse* and dancers, and singers, and actresses. The other relation you approved. May I say that I disagree with you on both points? I can say so

the more freely because I am not likely to have an offer of either kind. For the few friends I have of that class are friends only. Nothing would more surprise me than an offer of marriage from any of them—nothing, except the alternative you approve, and of that they are incapable.

Yours very truly,
GLADYS LUTTRELL.

LXXVII

MY DEAREST GRACE,

You know I haven't forgotten you, only it's hard to write to you, because you know what no one else knows, and writing to you makes me think of what I want to forget.

Very many thanks for your help in Dr. R.'s affair; your friends are towers of strength. Lord Henry has got Herr Schwartzenhagen on our side. He has—I don't know how or why—great influence with this Government. Perhaps they admire the integrity that has made him a South African millionaire in a few years, and the frugality which restricts him to gold plate at every meal! Mr. Oscar Finnies is working the Glastonbury interest for all it's worth, and has beside secured the Duchess of Garnard. By devious routes, Mr. Talbot has got a beautiful testimonial in favour of Dr. Ramond from the first man of science at Harvard. It appears that Nonconformists can vote for Parliament, so I wrote to Mr. Jessey, and as he didn't answer by return, I was a little afraid I'd taken a liberty. On the second day, he sent a list of

eighteen people he'd written to, and gently reproached me for having been away so long. I dread seeing him. He and Aunt Gertie have the same way of reading your heart. Aunt and her husband and boy came back the other day. Of course, directly we were alone she went straight to the point. Poor dear! she knows all about unhappy love affairs; she doesn't love Mr. Rogers as she did Uncle Rupert. It was a comfort to talk about it with her, and she won't tell anyone. She said it was a mercy I didn't marry him. I asked how she knew. "Because you were so careful not to mention who played Othello!"

It may have been a mercy, but I loved him and love him now. Goodness hasn't much to do with your loving people. Here's an instance: you know Mr. Talbot, otherwise 'Stace? Well, he's not anything like so old as I used to think—just thirty. He's been back a little while, and looks us up pretty often. He was my first acting-manager, and we've been friends ever since the days of Constantine. There's a photograph of him in my room; you said his look was distinctive. That's right; 'Stace isn't machine-made.

My room has become the resort of the family, who think that everyone's to be found there. With a south and a west window to let in or

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keep out sun and air, and with the furniture and some pretty things, and Berkshire flowers disposed by my own deft hands, it doesn't look at all bad. When the afternoon stillness has fallen upon Nightingale Place, and the trees of the Square (visible from the back window) are waving and rustling, and the clock of St. James's lazily striking, and the cats are dozing in sunny window-sills, then it is a pleasant place.

The other day mother and I and Mr. Talbot had been dining at the professional hour—three o'clock—and Mr. John had come in, as he often does, and we ate his "Downs" strawberries joyfully. At the usual time Mr. John went off to his club, and mother left us soon afterwards, advising me to sleep, which 'Stace took as a hint, and would have gone, but was not allowed. I never sleep in the afternoon, and I don't care to be alone.

'Stace told me that he's going to give some matinées of "The Dewy Eve," and wants me to play a telling comedy part. He thinks Davies will lend me.

Suddenly it came into my head to ask him about the girl with the violet eyes. He denied her boldly. "It's no use, 'Stace," I said; "I know you're in love. Your eyes told me directly I saw you. Come. You might tell me."

He looked at me for a minute without speak-

ing, and smiled as he does when he gets the humour of something all to himself.

"I will," he said at last; "I'll own up, Gladys. I've been in love for years——"

"'Stace, you should have told me!"

"Do let me have some of the dialogue, dear," he replied. "And my love affair is, you will be surprised to hear, of the theatrical, sentimental sort. The woman—you've never met her—does not know I love her—*vieux jeu*, isn't it?—and, of course, since I made the discovery all my work's been for her—*vieux jeu* again! I've strewn her path with acting-management, melodrama, and comedy. America was an offering to her—the best so far; it would almost justify me——"

"Ask her, 'Stace; you must ask her!" I cried.

"You think it wise?"

"I'm sure of it. 'His deserts are small.'"

"It's a question of her consent," he went on. "Gladys, I've been in love with her for years; she has waited without my asking her."

"She loves you."

"You forget she doesn't know. She could scarcely help waiting most of the time."

"She must be getting on now."

"Oh, she is! But her looks are not her only merit."

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" Ah! the violet eyes? "

" That is your invention. They are grey. Don't run away with the idea that her looks are of no account. Her face has the firm, soft lines of a medallion; her features have delicacy, and are full of character as well. She has the air of command."

" Of noble race, I suppose? "

" For all I know. Her expression—well, people don't agree about her expression. I say that it rests on sweetness. But, after all, she herself is the great attraction; she's warm-hearted and generous and loyal, of ready wit and frank speech, independent, of a high temper, and the best nature in the world."

" 'Stace, you *are* in love! "

" I am, and the worst of it is I know she doesn't love me."

" How? "

" I told her that I loved her, and she gave no sign."

" But just now you said you hadn't told her."

" I hadn't then," he said; and at last I knew he meant me, and the tears rushed into my eyes, and I could not speak.

He crossed over to me and took my hand.

" Ethel dear, I was too anxious about the sign.

I've spoken lightly about a grave matter, because——”

“Because that's your way, 'Stace; because you do kind things and say nothing of them; because you do great services to your friends and will not be thanked, so that I know you to be the best, truest man I've met. 'Stace, dear, I can give you no sign. I don't love you in the way you want me to. I wish I did, but you see I've grown up loving you in quite a different way, and that prevents the other.”

“Not always, dear.”

“It does with me,” I said; “and, 'Stace, you know me pretty well. Should I marry a man I didn't love?”

“No. But——”

“A moment, 'Stace. I think it would be very wrong of me to let you think I can ever love you. You've heard many of my secrets. I must tell you one now. While you were away I have been in love, and am still. It is not a thing I like to speak of; it's not a happy affair. The man I love is not married—you understand, 'Stace?”

“Yes, dear, I think I do,” he said; “but I don't know the sort of man that can make you unhappy when he knows you love him. He must be—well, I won't make you more unhappy.

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You needn't think I shall have any false hopes, dear. I shall go on loving you, as I have for a longish time now, and I shan't love anyone else—never have—and, Ethel, forget this, and we'll be as we were."

And he held my hand very hard for a moment and went away. I don't love him at all, and never could. He is worth thousands like the man I do love.

Your loving friend,
ETHEL.

LXXVIII

Nightingale Place.

DEAR LORD HENRY CONYERS,

Pray accept my sincerest congratulations on your engagement. I was delighted with the news, as it confirmed my own observation when I met Lady Caroline Carey at the lunch Mr. Adrian Sylvester gave in honour of my first appearance on the walls of any picture-gallery. Though he's labelled the portrait "Unfinished," I can't see what more there is to do to it. His success with the expression is very much due to the soldier-chaperon, who did so much to relieve the strain of sitting to the sensitive Mr. Adrian. He has the temper of a stage-manager, but he controls it, and a stage-manager doesn't.

I think it's a great pity you're giving up the army when you're so fond of that most natural of all professions, and when everyone knows you're the best of our cavalry officers. I should hate to give up a profession I loved just as I'd mastered it; so many of you soldiers do that. And I don't think that "you'll serve your country just as well by taking the Studely

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pack." Many thanks for promising me a good place at St. George's (the church), and for offering to teach me hunting. Alas! I can accept only the first offer. With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

GLADYS LUTTRELL.

LXXIX

Folly Theatre.

DEAR MR. FINNIES,

I am delighted to hear that the loss of your relatives has the best of all consolations, and that you are now able to drive me down to Chepe after the performance. A midnight drive behind those blue roans would realise my most romantic imaginings. Unfortunately, my mother is timid about driving at any hour, and I could not leave her to the torture of seeing me suffer all the accidents possible with any driver but yourself. I shall go to Miss Newsome's by the new-fangled invention, the railway, and shall see you on Sunday. Come to the further hammock after lunch. I want to see the list of the people you're going to bring to my stall at the Histrionic Widow's bazaar. I've got a hundred proofs of my likeness signed by Adrian Sylvester and me. Sold by the fair original! That's worth a guinea at least.

Yours very sincerely,

E. G. HOBSON.

LXXX

London.

MY DEAR GRACE,

You may well say that I must have woken one morning to find myself famous. There is, after the strange fashion of London, a Gladys Luttrell boom. It may be accounted for by Adrian Sylvester's "Portrait of a Lady" at the "London Artists," by my being at Lord Henry's wedding (the Countess of Kilburn asked me to the house), or (and least probably) by my own merits. At all events, there it is. Sylvester's likeness has been reproduced in all the picture-papers, photographers besiege me, and my (own) name appeared in the list of guests at the Conyers-Carey wedding.

These honours have not improved the "friendly neutral" attitude of the Folly ladies. Lucette Chevasse has, per favour of one of the syndicate, lately joined us. Her friend, who gets up companies, is financing the next piece, which means buying a part for her. A visitor of mine has created much sensation—Mr. Jessey, dear! The Bishop of London in full canonicals

couldn't have caused greater excitement. Very kindly Belle withdrew to contradict the report that I was *in articulo mortis*, and longing to ease my conscience by confession. Firstly, Mr. Jessey told me that our man had got the berth. Won't Edith be delighted? I wrote to her at once. Dr. Ramond's appointment will be announced in a few days. Then came what I dreaded. Why had I not been to Arbour Road for so long? He knew I had been in great trouble, and he feared the effect it might have on me.

"You're not one of us, Ethel," he said, "but you and your happiness are dear to me. You flattered the actor in me when, a little girl, you liked to hear me preach. Since your father died, and we became friends, I have felt that in some respects I could take his place. That is really the reason I came, not to question you on your troubles, but to warn you. There is a bias to every nature, and according to that bias is its direction and course in life. Ethel, you know where your bias will land you."

"It'll make me hard," I said; and he was pleased.

"Ever honest Ethel," he said. "You know your danger; guard against it. Don't stay away from us much longer."

As he went out one of the chorus spoke to him,

THE LETTERS OF AN ACTRESS

is just what I was near Camden Town. He ought to have looked out of place in the crowd of a musical theatre, among Amazons of the ballet and the dancing girls in shining gauze. It was the other way about. He seemed in his right place.

Of course Mr. Jessey's right. I feel myself hardening. My life isn't particularly elevating, what with bazaars and suppers and Sandown, and all that sort of thing. And the children of pleasure do not raise one's idea of human nature. But it keeps me on the move, it prevents thinking, and it tires so that you go to sleep at once.

An eminent professor tried to make me understand the philosophy of one Nietzsche. The only thing I remember is that he said, "Be hard." I shall ask Mr. Jessey about him.

So you make assignations in the Alps, and Mr. Jervis has changed his holiday plans? I bless the place that is doing you so much good. Will you have to be marked "Cured in Germany?" I am tired. Through the stillness I hear the tramp of armed men; they are changing guard at St. James's. Good-night, dear.

Your

ETHEL.

LXXXI

London.

DEAREST GRACE,

Mid-August, rehearsals, rows, heat, and solitude! Mr. John is in Scotland—no more Saturdays to Mondays at Downs—and Miss Newsome has let Chepe, my other refuge. Mother and Aunt and the children are at Eastbourne, Alice and the lady cashier are running Glover's, and my soul is living in the basement of an abyss. All the depression and hopelessness that I have kept off so long have closed round me. The Sheridan is running through with understudies; the bills announce the early reappearance of Mr. Conrad Fletcher. If I read, all the heroes are like him; if I sit in the Park, the Castleford scenes appear on an endless panorama cloth. Sunday is my only good day, because I see Mr. Jessey in the evening; twice he has walked through Regent's Park with me. I go home comforted, resigned, nearly at peace, and hoping that pain and regret and longing are gone. The next day is not so bad; on Tuesdays the old torture begins. I cannot bear to be alone, and dare not be too much with Alice, who is very clear-sighted. Belle Avondale is my

resource. We haunt Bond Street after rehearsals, know the shop windows by heart, have ices at Challeme! and Lacours, then another stroll and more needless refreshment at one of Belle's smart restaurants, then tea in some other place, and I am thankful to her for making the hours go.

She never tires of this foolish pleasure; she will sit for an hour watching the people in Challeme!'s, recognising them, or imagining who they are. Her chatter is endless, her knowledge of smart London is wonderful. She seems to know all the irregular relations of society—male and female, married and unmarried. "That's Bertie Mason the M.P.," she'll say, when a much-groomed man, *dans la cinquantaine*, comes in. "Three minutes and we shall see young Mrs. Rivitt. Doesn't seem to care for chocolate, does he? Ah! I said so. Here she is—come up from Sele Court in Kent about a servant's character." An interval. "That big pale woman's Georgie Etherington, doing her best to live on the ten thousand Lord Colgrave settled on her."

We move to Laurence's for tea. More material for Belle. She is much moved by the costly elegance of Estelle Byers, who nods to her. "On her way to Contrexèville, after the big shoot at Barden Moor. She doesn't travel with the Prince." Other celebrities pass through—Rhoda

Kingsford, Maggie Willis, etc., etc. Belle tells me of their wealth and luxury, and of the devotion of their friends. She will compare their style and looks with mine. A nice way of passing the time, isn't it, Grace? It's like Balzac showing you what society really is. They're all here—bankers, financiers, barristers, merchants, and even the lowly actor. It makes one cynical, and I think is meant to. Captain Ducie comes behind pretty often; he's put five hundred in the new piece and is friendly with Belle. Is she doing as she's told? Ducie ought to know me better. For very weariness I've been to supper with him once—twice—not alone, you may be sure. My nerves are gone wrong. I have strange, silly notions, and am getting afraid of Ducie; the man's persistence, his confidence, and the cold gleams of his eyes annoy and enrage me. My part in "The Girl from Nowhere" is shrinking daily; Lucette Chevasse's is growing. Ducie offered to speak to Davies for me, and I said he'd better not interfere. I think he has, for the cutting-down business has stopped. This is a doleful letter, dear. You know I must speak to you, the only one I can speak to. Don't be alarmed. I shall get through as other girls have.

Remember me to Mr. Jervis.

Your loving

ETHEL.

LXXXII

*Folly Theatre,
August 22nd.*

DEAR MR. BRADEHAM,

I must thank you for giving me an opportunity for being frank. It has come in time to save me the trouble of making an opportunity for myself—for speaking to you in the plain English which, rather late in the day, you profess to admire so much. You “fear,” you say, “that the more delicate and discreet methods you have hitherto adopted have failed to convey your meaning to me.” I can assure you they have not. Whether delicate or indelicate, whether discreet or equivocal, they certainly have not failed in conveying your intentions to me and other people.

As to the proposition (proposal is used for the other kind, isn’t it?) which you put with such admirable plainness, I shall perhaps surprise you by refusing to consider it. Of course, I see that, having married a lady with money, you could make no other proposition, but I don’t see that you need have made any proposition. Oh, I am forgetting—your feelings toward me were

the reason—I see! I am so thankful they did not urge you to anything illegal. Your passion might have brought you to bigamy, but your prudence and (perhaps) your knowledge of the law have been your salvation. Pray excuse me from giving more attention to this subject beyond acknowledging at its full value the feeling that prompted an offer which I shall never forget. May I warn you that there is some risk in assuming that every actress at a musical theatre is open to such offers as yours? Many of them are ladies—not in the sense in which you are a gentleman—and some of them are able to reply in a way which I do not like to use, because it might get you into trouble with your wife. But do be careful, Mr. Bradeham; some ladies in musical theatres are impulsive!

I mayn't have to write to you again for a long while, so I will tell you one or two other things it may do you good to know. Just now I referred to your knowing the law, but really I am not sure whether you or your friend, Mr. Wooddell, is the barrister. I know one is a lawyer and one a doctor, but which is which I never could remember. You are so much alike in everything except appearance: you are both prudent; you have both married ladies with money; each is unknown in his profession, and notorious for a belated, parsimonious profligacy. You're

called the Twin Screws, because you're never known to part. When I received your proposition yesterday it gave me quite a shock that you had not signed for "self and partner."

By-the-by, everyone knows that you are the son of a tailor in Devonshire, and everyone laughs at you for being ashamed of it. There's a novel about a tailor—"Evan Harrington" it's called—you should read it. He turns out a good sort. And, dear Mr. Bradeham, if you're the son of a tailor it isn't wise to speak of a lady you admire as having been "dragged up in a Camden Town pub.!" Such speeches are no doubt quite in character for a man of the world, but you shouldn't have said it to Captain Ducie. He is the only one of my friends who says things about my other friends, and he has said many things about your evident delight at getting, even at a restaurant, into society for which neither status nor nature had fitted you. I don't know whether you're very sensitive, but you're very self-conscious.

Dear Mr. Bradeham, be more a man of the world. Captain Ducie *will* call you and Mr. Wooddell *les deux bourgeois*, and I can't help feeling there's a painful truth in it. I have a great respect for the middle-classes, who are, I am told, the backbone and core and several other

things of this country. It is possible to be too middle class. You want "breaking down," Mr. Bradeham, as we say in the "public" business. And, speaking for myself, I like to believe that the middle-classes are respectable. I am afraid it's an illusion, and you might destroy it. I don't like to think of the middle-classes giving their days to dishonourable practices and their evenings to dishonourable propositions. You, Mr. Bradeham, won't be so low and radical as to say that the same thing applies to lords and members of the ruling classes. Don't think that I am angry with you. It is not that; it's merely that I don't appreciate you. Even physically you don't appeal to me. I don't care for mere bulk. The little women like that. Baby Thornton (number four of our show-girls on prompt side) says she is clean gone on you. Of course, you're good-looking, but you do remind me of a hairdresser, and I never did like a stencilled complexion in a man. Let me end with a piece of advice—stick to your lawyering or doctoring, keep in your own station, don't run after Baby Thornton, and be good to your wife Captain Ducie heard she was very nice—Mrs. Hilliard, I mean, or Miss Hilliard was it that you married—the mother or the daughter? Well, whichever had the money—that's sure to be right, isn't it?

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**At any rate, she is your wife, and you ought to
keep your part of the bargain.**

Yours faithfully,

E. G. LUTTRELL.

BRADHAM T. BRADHAM, Esq.

LXXXIII

*c/o Mrs. Hawood,
Byfield,
Herts,
September 3.*

MY DEAREST GRACE,

"The Girl from Nowhere" has made her appearance, and, thanks to the comedians, has done fairly well. Miss Chevasse had better have been content with the position for which her undeniable physical gifts so well qualify her. A brutal perseverance, rather handicapped by a bad memory, enabled her to dance without grace and to some applause. No one can be blamed for not having a voice, but they can be for trying to sing.

My part is more than modest, it is shy. Fortunately, it is in little bits, and almost entirely with the men, with whom I work well. So every time I do my utmost, and now everyone is saying, "Why hasn't Gladys Luttrell got more to do?" which is precisely what I wanted them to say.

Scarcely had I received your comforting letter—surely you have second sight—crossing mine,

when my celestial agent-in-advance (who had been rather neglecting his duties lately) inspired Mrs. Hawood to ask me to stay with them for a little while. I had met her at Chepe, and sometimes at Downs; she is a cousin of Mr. Oscar, and I'm sure she ought to have married him. Her husband is in some respectable financial house (I didn't know there were any), writes for an unspeakable paper called the *Statist*, is a moderate Radical (*centre gauche*), and an agreeable instructor in the art of bicycling. The carriage meets me every night, and I drive through a country odorous with pine. I think Miss Newsome suggested this invitation; I had written a much overdue letter to her a little while before it came, and, as usual, I was too frank, being a bad actress with the pen. Already the change has done me good. I don't feel as if I was crumbling to bits, nor always think of the same thing. Some plans of Captain Ducie's seem to have miscarried; he looks as genial as a well-bred alligator. (N.B.—My last train prevents me going out to supper.)

An innocent remark of mine has vexed the soul of a lady at the Galaxy.

"Brutmeyer, the bric-a-brac man, is looking after Evelyn Brune now," Belle said the other night. "Fancy that!"

"Oh," I said, "he can take care of himself; there's no better judge of an *article de vertu*."

Now, where's the harm of that; why should Evelyn rage?

I don't think Mr. Jervis knows much about the Alps; he's staying in the least interesting part.

Commend me to Edith and Dr. Ramond, and (not to be pointed) to Mr. Jervis. Wish I was with you. It must be hard for you and Mr. Jervis having always to avoid the engaged couple. Oh, that I had the wings of a chaperon, and could fly away to Switzerland. "Pray remember me to your friend, Miss Grace Martin, a lady I respect very highly." Thus Mr. Jessey in his last letter. Oh, Grace, do you deserve that, when you have a secret from your dearest, most loving, and most grateful friend?

Yours ever,

ETHEL.

LXXXIV

Folly (Entr'acte),
Sept. 15th.

DEAR 'STACE,

I have just seen Davies, who has been graciously pleased to let me off for your month at the Duke's. He was most particular about "eight weeks only." I did not forget to point out the sort of part he's given me in this piece! Considering he's going to put Belle into it, he'll be making something by his kindness. Trust him! Let me repeat that if you, 'Stace Talbot, are putting your hand into your own pocket, I come for the dramatic salary (that is, two-thirds). If the pocket is not yours, then I take full money. Is that right? Send Lady Millicent along, and I will get into her skin. Here's success to "The Dewy Eve" and its author.

Always yours,
E. G. HOBSON.

LXXXV

*Nightingale Place,
October 8.*

DEAR MR. JERVIS,

Many thanks for the Castleford paper with the description of Edith's wedding. I'm sure you put yourself down to propose "The Ladies," and can well believe that "Mr. Walter Jervis's humorous speech evoked general merriment, not unmixed with protests." I'd have protested if I had been there, because I know just the sort of provoking, half-true, and utterly unfounded things you would say! Is it true that you are better qualified for a speech on that subject than you were when I last saw you? If there is a verbatim report of this oration, may I have one to discuss with Miss Martin?

Pray thank "the Exile" for his kindly opinion of me. I'm sorry the poor man so seldom treads his native pavement. What if he were tempted back by a full-sized chair of psychology? Would not the post-exilian writings want the elegiac strain which gives a pensive charm to the Exile's contributions?

That Exile is a right good sort, and worth a

ton of the garden critics. He's the only one who has seen the merit of Mr. Talbot's play. For years they have been begging, praying, and shouting for a play of real life and real people. "Give us," they cried, "a natural play!" and with one accord they fall foul of "The Dewy Eve" for not being theatrical!

You are the only one who did Mr. Talbot anything like justice, instead of tossing him empty compliments about "brilliance," and "epigram," and "promise." I took the article down to 'Stace—that's Mr. Talbot—and he said you had found him out, and that he would never write another play. He's never serious about himself, but I know he liked the article, because he asked me the name of the one good man in the cities of the Plain. I said it was Jervis. If ever you come to London Town there will be *une partie carrée* at Theodore's. You, 'Stace, I, and another lady. What lady? That's my business. I pays my money and takes my choice.

Vernacularly, psychologically, and gratefully,
Your respectful friend,

E. G. HOBSON.

LXXXVI

*London,
Thursday.*

MY DEAREST GRACE,

And this, I said, is fame! It is high noon; a speckled waif, who was found on the window-sill of my room, is playing with my hair; my breakfast is on (I believe) a table at the side of the bed, portions of the nine dailies lie about the bed and room; all the family (even Alice, the manager) are here reading papers, exchanging papers, commenting on papers. They are also talking; the dramatic critics are either darlings or beasts, according to what they say of Ethel. Darlings predominate, and the beasts aren't very terrible. Jem brings up evenings at short intervals—you remember him at the Tankard?—he is a gorgeous chasseur now, and clever with his hands—a useful quality in his position. Each time he knocks I ask whether he's seen anyone who was at the Duke's last night. Evasive replies, for last night he was not on duty, having sent his wife (that pretty girl) to tell mother that he'd got a sick headache.

I went off early, and as he shut the cab-door he said: "Wish yer luck, Miss Gladys, and 'ope

you'll score on the lot! And you will with arf a chance, for a good big un 'll always beat a good little un, and you've more friends than you think for. Right!" And the cab whirled off before I had got over my surprise at Jem's fluency. Certainly I am tall, but would you call me "a big un"? Rose Mitchell, our lead, is little, but we are not trying to act against one another. Nothing will get that idea out of Jem's head; he is convinced that acting is a fight for applause, and that the others are trying to "best" me.

I was dressed and made up too soon—a great mistake—and in two minutes I went as nervous as an amateur. I wrote "feeling bad" on the inside of an envelope and sent it to 'Stace, as in the days of Constantine. He came round, and we walked up and down the stage till my nerves were quieted.

Lady Millicent does not come on at the beginning, so the house was comfortable when she did appear in the foamy muslin creation of the Maison Letellier. The ladies whispered, "Who is she?" and sighed appreciation of the dress. No one noticed me. Two speeches that ought to have "gone" went flat, as I had over-pointed them. That was nervousness, and it soon went, and in the comedy at the end of the act I did well.

My chance came in the second act, when I turned upon my faithless lover. The scene was simply written, but the situation was strong and the language natural. 'Stace said it wanted feeling without melodrama. While studying and rehearsing the part I thought this scene was like what I had gone through, and last night, as I went for it, all the suffering, the bitterness, and regret of these months burst from my heart, filled my voice, made my eyes harden, my hand quiver with passion. The actor changed. It was Conrad. We were in the beautiful room; he was speaking as he never spoke to me there. Love and shame and pity and contempt were in my voice, and at the last, when I let myself go completely, young Rayne was dumbfounded, forgot his words, stammered something, stopped short, and stared at me. There was only one thing to do. I looked at him, and went off the stage. Then the applause burst out, deafening, irresistible, persistent! 'Stace was at the entrance, and made me take the call. "Inartistic but human," he said when I came off. "You've saved the piece, Ethel dear, and made yourself famous. Oh, you were very admirable, very touching, very true, and not melodramatic! Bravo, little pal! you'll be as good an actress as Miss Delapre."

"Oh, 'Stace, you see everything!" I said. "I

had Aunt Gertie in my mind from the first, as you had when you wrote the part."

"Tut, tut!" he said, taking my hand. "This from one of my company! Enough! Madam, be prepared to take the act call, which is coming as sure as eggs are eggs."

It came, and from the stage I could see he was watching me, looking, not like a successful author, but as he looked when I said I could not marry him.

The rest of the play went all right, and the calls were loud and genuine, and the man in the gallery who led the call for me had a sick headache and could not go to work. It was Jem, and he had some friends there.

(Later.) All the evenings are come now, and are just as nice about me, and I hate them for their grudging praise of Mr. Talbot. They don't like his truthful pictures of our noble *bourgeoisie* and of our shopocrats.

Jem has been summoned to the presence, and required to explain his conduct. He has done so in language of vivid metaphor. He had half a score friends in the pit and best part of a score in the gallery, with orders to follow the public lead in applauding me.

"You can't say it wasn't on the square, Miss Gladys. You did your little bit; if the people

said yus, why we follered 'em; if not, we kept as still as dead cats," he said.

"Well," I said, "it's very kind of you and your friends, Jem, but I'd rather you didn't do it again."

"You're a long way wrong, Miss Gladys. Take that from me," he said. "Play the game as the others do. A nice dirty trick they served you at the Folly first night—that Miss Chavvis and her crowd. "Never again," I said; "every next time I see fair for Miss Gladys." You remember when I come to the Tankard you was rising ten, and the Captain, he says, whenever he leaves the 'ouse: 'You look to Miss Gladys, Jem'; and I looked, and shall so continue."

He finished quickly, and was out of the room in a second. All the morning it has poured telegrams, now the letters are coming: one from Mrs. Hawood and one from Mr. Jessey, who points out that a certain critic hasn't got his Greek right. Please, dear, come to England at once to see me in this part. Don't want to go to theatre, want to go to bed.

Your loving

ETHEL.

LXXXVII

London.

DEAREST MOTHER,

The Conyers asked me to dine with them yesterday (Sunday), *not* to a dinner-party. They had only a few friends—about twelve of us altogether. I was introduced as Miss Hobson, and the fact of my being on the stage wasn't mentioned till Schwartzenhagen, the South African man, began to talk about Miss Luttrell. He was very pleasant about her, and the secret would have been kept if Lord Henry hadn't given it away through making me laugh, and then he burst out: "Don't you know, Schwartzenhagen, Miss Hobson is Miss Luttrell. You've been amusing her, I can tell you. Say, you haven't got a theatre you don't want, have you? Lend it me for Miss Luttrell, there's a good fellow. Finnies has written a lovely play, all in verse, expressly for Miss Luttrell——"

"Oh, stop that, Conyers," Oscar said a little sharply; and Lord Henry stopped, and Lady Henry looked distressed, not quite understanding her husband's ways.

The house is rather like Grace's, but her second drawing-room is much better.

The people were pleasant, and had seen and done most things. Mr. Finnies is very fit after his yachting, and was at some pains to apologise for writing a play for me. Mr. Schwartzenhagen asked the whole party to dine and see our piece. We go on for another fortnight. Kisses to Cyprian; tell him the kitten's flourishing. Alice is looking after things admirably, so don't be anxious.

Your loving daughter,

ETHEL.

LXXXVIII

October 21.

MY DEAREST GRACE,

"The Dewy Eve" has put me several steps up in the Profession. The other day I had a letter from Mr. Quentin of the St. George's, asking me to call upon him at the theatre. Of course, I consulted 'Stace, and learned a good deal about Quentin. It appears he was brought up to the upholstery—Robinson and Eyres, Regent Street—that Eyres is a form of Isaacs, and Quentin another form. He made his name in the early sixties, playing peers of the novelette kind, and plays them still, after failing as Sir Peter Teazle and Touchstone. He is the profession's ideal of a gentleman. I know that ideal, own brother to the shoppies! 'Stace says he's *un faux bon homme*, a mechanical actor, and a mat for the feet of lords. Also that he is illiterate; that he astounded London with the word "vehackular," and that he entangles himself among unrelated participles (unpardonable these, according to 'Stace). "All this," he continued, "for your private delectation, my dear Ethel. Coming to business, I say get with Quen-

tin if you can. He's on the down grade, but he's good for some time yet, and he's a first-rate manager for young artistes—yes, I should say actresses—the other's a horrible word. Quentin knows no more of human nature than he does of literature, but he does know what is acting and what is not, and he'll do you a heap of good. A last counsel! Hearken!" I hearkened and set off to the St. George's, where, in due course, I was taken to a little wizened, elderly, yellow man, with a flattened nose, who was dressed in imitation of Lord Henry, Ducie, and Mr. Finnies. Compliments, smiles, and a plainly false manner swearing at the expression of his mouth (muffin lips, and the egoistic swelling on the upper one). He had seen me as Lady Millicent—a singularly able performance, creditable to any *artiste*, remarkable in so young a lady.

I let it all soak in. "What a fool you think me, Mr. Quentin!" said I to myself, said I. We come to business. The style changes. It is a mixture of the draper's circular and the theatrical advertisement. Rather pompous, modestly self-depreciatory, mournful over expense of theatre.

Then he talked of the play he wants me for. It is by John Smith the dramatist, who is yet a human being of like passions with ourselves.

I said I liked Smith's play at the Sheridan, which was such a great success. Mr. Quentin looked wild at that, as if other people had no right to successes.

Then we came to the part, one for which I and Miss Chesterton are both fitted (Miss C. is ten years older than I, and very expensive). We got to what he calls the delicate question of terms.

"I'm no hand at haggling," he says genially; "I hate beating about the bush. Tell me your lowest terms, and if I can give them I will, and if I can't there's an end of the matter."

I name my terms. He promptly offers me half ('Stace had prepared me for this trick). I declined, and the man who can't haggle argues for a quarter of an hour on the advantage of playing at his theatre in a piece of Smith's, dresses chosen by Mrs. Quentin, prospect of another engagement, and all the rest of it.

To no purpose. I tell him that the Folly are paying me my terms, and have to for another six months.

"What's Talbot paying you?" he snapped.

"Nothing," I said; "I'm lent."

He made another effort—two-thirds for eight weeks, full salary after; still I decline, telling him that money is the only object. By this time

all his manner has gone, and the ancestral Isaacs, in a very bad temper, opens the door for me.

I was half-way up the stairs when I remembered my purse, and went back for it. The door of Mr. Quentin's room was wide open. I heard groans of rage and swear words, and saw him stamping to and fro in about as vile a temper as man was ever in.

I knocked, and, as he didn't or wouldn't take any notice, I went in, took my purse, and went away.

If he hadn't been in such a rage he might have noticed that it was rather strange for a lady so keen about money to be so careless about her purse.

At lunch I reproduced the interview for 'Stace, who was greatly delighted.

"Bet you a shilling he engages you," he said.

"How do you know?"

"Is it a bet?"

"Yes, yes; tell me quick!"

"Smith wants you."

"Who told you?"

"A little bird."

"You are a childish owl, 'Stace!"

That's the end of the story. I'm not engaged

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by Quentin. I'm much more excited at the thought of seeing you well at last, and able to walk in my Park with me. Come soon.

Your devoted

ETHEL.

LXXXIX

Sunday, N. P.

MY BEST OF FRIENDS,

Don't you wish you were an impulsive, romantic, unscientific believer in coincidences? "Coincidences are like miracles," you said; "they don't happen." No? Then listen to my artless lay! To-day I have been to a sumptuous and prolonged luncheon at Mr. Schwartzengagen's Asiatic palace—The Helotry, Park Lane—which was about as cheerful as lunching with the better class of bank-notes and the shiniest of new sovereigns. The talk was entirely about money—getting it, making it, spending it! These people pay for their one gift—the knack of making money—all their intelligence goes in it. When they've got it they can only spend it in eating and drinking and buying things, because they're expensive. And to see them lying as flat as their figures will allow before the titled people! One of them told me that Cazin couldn't be as good a *paysagiste* as Leader because his pictures didn't fetch as much. That by the way; enough of moralising. If these people are

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not amusing they may be useful, and if I don't put some of their women on the stage it won't be for want of trying.

Are you looking for that coincidence? It is coming, Sister Grace—it is coming. Nothing like exciting the curiosity.

After lunch we retired into the conservatory, which, taking the mean of the various estimates, must work out at something like £1,500 per super foot, one of the guests told me. I was bored to death, and longing for 'Stace, a side-table at Theodore's, and some human talk, when up comes Lord Henry, looking as healthy as the conscientious M. F. H. deserves to look. The gilt-edged security who had been talking to me interpreted my enthusiastic welcome of Lord Henry as a hint for him to go. He was right.

"Like to hear some good news of one of your friends?" said Lord Henry.

"You're going back to the army?" I said, delighted.

"No such luck," he answered, looking as sad as the young man who had great possessions, except that the great possessions were Lady Caroline's.

"You're always so glad when your pals come out top," he went on.

"I wanted you to command a cavalry division and sweep the Germans into the Baltic,"

"It'd want some doing," he said. "Ever heard of a book called 'Liberty and Authority?'"

"The one that made hay of Mr. Balfour's philosophy. Yes; Mr. Jervis told me I wouldn't care for it."

"He wrote it."

"Anonymously, instead of beating drums and blowing trumpets and covering the walls with twenty-four-sheet posters!" I cried. "Oh, he might have told me!"

"Perhaps he didn't want it advertised."

"I can keep a secret."

"Here's one. Arthur J.'s appointed him professor of—what is it?"

"Applied psychology."

"Yes, that's it—professor of applied psychology at Sandhurst."

"Oh, those poor boys!"

"Rather sportsmanlike of Arthur, I call it, considering," said Lord Henry.

"Oh, Arthur's not a bad sort," I said. "Now tell me all about it. Is it a good berth? When does he go? Can he live in London? Will he wear a heliotrope hood?"

Conyers' answers took some getting, but I got 'em.

Where's that coincidence? Coming lady!

I had scarcely got home—Jem had just helped

me out of the cab—when I saw a familiar back in the distance.

“Is that Mr. Jervis?” I asked.

“Just called, miss; left half a dozen cards—same name on every one.”

“After him, Jem, if you love me!” I cried.

Jem’s a six-furlong flyer with a pretty action; he was out of sight under the minute.

“He’ll catch him,” said the cabman, interested, and almost directly they turned the corner.

“Lurking about London without telling me, Mr. Jervis,” I said, giving a disdainful hand to him. I took him in, woke up the sleepers, and gave him tea. Not a word about his own affairs did my gentleman say. Oh no! He said soft things to mother, clever things to Alice, and played with the kitten and Cyprian.

“Come with me to hear Mr. Jessey,” I said; and he agreed, and we started.

“So, you’re going to Sandhurst?” I said.

“Where on earth did you hear that?” he asked. “It was only settled yesterday.”

“You needn’t be so emphatic with your ‘on earth,’ as if I’d been refused at both the other places,” I said. “Never mind where I heard. I did hear. Of course, it would have been nice if you’d told me you were trying for it.”

“I didn’t even tell Edith.”

"If you didn't tell anyone but officials I will forgive you," I said.

"What are you driving at?" he said, laughing, and began talking of Mr. Jessey.

"I suppose Mr. Jessey knows you wrote 'Liberty and Authority'?"

"I wrote! I asked Grace not to tell anyone."

"Grace!" I said.

Grace! I say again. R.S.V.P.! Write! Telegraph! This matter must be explained to my satisfaction. Dear, I am so glad! I saw the truth in his eyes.

Your loving, delighted

ETHEL.

P.S.—Lord Henry told me that my visit to Mrs. Hawood was due to Mr. Finnies. Wasn't it kind of him? He'll be a credit to his country. I'm thinking of ways of removing his surviving relatives without exciting attention.—E.

XC

Duke of Glo's'ter's,
November 7th.

DEAR CAPTAIN DUCIE,

Please do not think me ungrateful in returning your beautiful present. Messrs. Fairs and Sampson sent a letter stating that the writing-case undoubtedly belonged to the *Duchesse de Chateauroux*, and bears her first cypher. Very likely I am foolish, but I don't care about having even such a pretty thing as this is with its associations. And I am treating it with more consideration than some unwelcome presents have had. I danced on the others.

Yours very truly,
GLADYS LUTTRELL.

XCI

London,
Jan. 6.

MY DEAR 'STACE,

Here is your shilling with a hole in it to bring luck to the new piece. I've had to wait a long time to get it in the ordinary course of business, which is the only effectual way. Is Dallington-on Sea inspiring you? I do hope it is. I want you to make a success without giving up your own ideas. Blue roses, you'll say? Well, they're the best. All fine and true and beautiful things are blue roses; only when they succeed, people say they are a new shade of red.

Our piece is not a flaming glory. Quentin's pathos has paralysed it. Now, the pathos of Quentin is the pathos of the shark.

The company are very nice, mostly ladies and gentlemen, though they can act. Mr. and Mrs. Soper, the original society actors, are with us, very Mid-Victorian. Two of a trade never agree, they say; *a fortiori*, a dozen won't, especially when some are women. Is the Church such a happy family that it can preach to us, or the Bar, or doctors? Thank heaven, these people

'don't bother their heads about being ladies and gentlemen, and for the life of me I can't see that they're much different from other people.

All but the great Joseph Quentin, who was lately thrown into a violent rage by some paper mentioning the furniture shop. Phillips at the Queen's doesn't mind people knowing that he was a draper. Do I care about Glover's being mentioned?

Talking of that, I've had a wilful child of genius, who sometimes came to the Tankard, recalled to my memory. You remember the Blinder, the man who mixed his bad language with imagination? Well, one morning, soon after the piece came out, I went to take seats for Grace, and commiserated the box-office clerk on his enforced idleness. He shook his head eloquently, and I went through the stalls to my room, the quickest way and against the rules. As I crossed I heard sounds from the stage, and saw Quentin there. When I got to the private door it was blocked by a man moving furniture. I took refuge in a box, fortunately covered, and for some minutes had the benefit of a stream of undistinguished profanity from Mr. Quentin, all because the booking was bad. As I passed the property man he wouldn't look at me for very shame of his manager.

The Castleford woman, Mrs. Yewlett, has

written again. She has no claim on me. What do you advise? I didn't answer her other letter.

Oh, yes, I think this part, small as it is, has done me good. If by any means possible, I want to keep out of musical comedy.

When do you start "The Dewy Eve" tour? Will you finish the play before that? Write soon and often.

Always sincerely yours,

ETHEL GLADYS.

XCI

London,

February 2.

MY DEAREST,

It isn't much consolation to be told that Torquay is not Mentone. I miss you just as much; really more, after seeing you every day for weeks. Never have I known joy so pure as the first day we walked abroad, and met one of your former Chancery masters, who could not understand my startling radiance. He thought I was strange in the head, when for the third time I said, "Grace can walk;" and he said, "I see the *feu de joie* has begun." "Where?" I asked. "In your eyes, Miss Hobson," he said, with his old-fashioned bow. His youth sparkled for a moment. I had a glimpse of a D'Orsay gallant!

However, I will not repine too much over your absence, for the gods have been good to me this year. I fancy them peeping over Olympus and catching sight of a modest figure crossing St. James's Square (giving the Rag a wide berth). It wears a tricorne.

"Tasty hat," says Mercury.

"Rather my style altogether," says Mars.
"Who is she?"

"He always was fond of mortals," says Aphrodite. "Zeus, who is it?"

"One of my lot," cut in Apollo—"Luttrell-Hobson, a mime. What's she like, Thalia?"

"A daughter of comedy; she'll do in time," says Thalia.

"Thinks no end of herself," says Artemis. "I dare say she's no better than she should be."

"Rather pensive for comedy. Where did she get that look in her eyes?" says Dionysus.

"My bow and arrow," says Eros. "She laughed at me."

"Oh, Father Zeus, couldn't you give her some joy?" says Hebe.

"No, I couldn't. You know I'm a limited and reduced monarch. Try the Fates," growled Zeus.

"Iris, ring them up," said Theseus. "Apollo, you might get round them."

"Gave up trying long ago; quite impossible people, the Fates," said Apollo.

Iris (*at telephone*). "Put me on to 'Fates'—Cosmos. Number? No number; they weren't invented when they started. Hullo! hullo! Who are you? I'm Iris, Olympus. Oh, Chronos, are you? Would you give our united kind regards to 'Fates,' and we should be so much obliged if they'd put a little colour into Gladys Luttrell's life?"

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"Heavens! What a style!" said Apollo.

"It is elegant." "Eh, what?" (Turns to gods.) "Actress says: 'Design registered; name also put as your gods, don't mind telling them.' Is register?" (Oh, thanks so much! You were all right—nothing to boast of, you know. How's Spas and the others? Much the same? Thanks. Goodbye. No: I didn't call you.")

"Needn't be so precious still, Iris," said Mercury. "They've not put themselves out for us. Most interesting people, the Fates, aren't they, Apollo?"

"I don't think that work should have been given to women," said Apollo, and all the gods laughed.

That dear Grace, is how I got Xmas at home, days with you, and escaped a painful engagement. Here is the new work of the Royal command. Last Sunday I was dining at Mrs. Harwood's, Port Street, and, of course, Oscar was there, also his cousin, the Hon. Christopher (Kit) Dawley, who is a high Court official. He told me that it was settled we should go on the 16th.

"A message was sent to Quentin to-day, fixing 16th," Kit said. "It'll be in the papers to-morrow." News, like other things, goes by favour. Quentin has his particular paper. I

remembered a man on the *Courier* who had been good to 'Stace, and as journalists are nocturnal animals like us, I drove to the office and sent my card in an envelope up to him. Down he came and took me to his room, where I told him the news, for which he was very grateful. His editor, a quite nice man, came in, and we talked generally, till he said:

"Excuse me, Miss Luttrell—a minute only. I say, Graham, old Glastonbury's dead. You might say something about him, if there's anything to say. About Talbot's play, Miss Luttrell—I dare say it was true, but we don't want truth on the stage. When I get a night off——" And so he went on, and all the time I was thinking of Oscar. If he's not careful he'll be an Earl. Love.

Your

ETHEL.

P.S.—Quentin is furious about it being in the *Courier*.

E.

XCHH

St. George's Theatre.

MY DEAR 'STACE,

Your letter about the Yewlett woman has put my mind at rest. All along I thought it looked like *chantage*, but she wrote so pitifully that, if it hadn't been for you, I should certainly have sent her some money. It's a mercy. You and your legal friend must be a couple of Machiavellis to have got her to make a written statement. I am glad she lives in terror of the jail. You have done me a great service—the greatest of many—'Stace. Often before I've wondered what would have become of me if it had not been for you.

Dear 'Stace, can I ever repay all your kindness, all your devotion? The one thing you want me to do I cannot. I feel it would be wrong. I have heard that the friendship of a woman who feels as I feel towards you is rarer and of more worth than her love.

All our lives, 'Stace, you and I will be friends like that.

Your affectionate

ETHEL.

XCIV

Windsor Castle.

MY DEAREST GRACE,

Court Circular.

Miss Gladys Luttrell had tea in the West Room.

Miss Gladys Luttrell wrote her name in the Queen's birthday book, and, to prevent mistakes, put her stage-name in brackets after her Christian and family names.

Miss Gladys Luttrell came down in the saloon carriage of a special train. T.R.H. the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester travelled in a compartment of the train.

Miss Gladys Luttrell was received by a guard of honour of 2nd Battalion of the Coldstream Guards, and would have preferred the Welsh Hussars.

Miss Gladys Luttrell, being used to soldiers, always returns a salute, and thinks she got one man three days C.B.

Miss Gladys Luttrell graciously accepted a diamond brooch from Her Majesty.

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Miss Gladys Luttrell took supper with various Royalties, foreign and domestic, and was careful to call every gentleman with a German accent Prince, as she can't be at the trouble of remembering their names.

Miss Gladys Luttrell was pleased to approve of all the arrangements except that by which she had to drive to the station with Mr. and Mrs. Soper. These persons' childish servility in being (at last) allowed to appear before Her Majesty extremely disgusted Miss Luttrell.

Miss Gladys Luttrell returned to London by special train, and drove to her residence in the neighbourhood of St. James's Palace.

Miss Gladys Luttrell recounted her experiences to her mother and family, and did not retire until an advanced hour.

Miss Gladys Luttrell called upon Miss Grace Martin, Shepherd Street, Mayfair, on the following afternoon. The proceedings were private, but have been reduced to writing, and will be published fifty years after the demise of the parties.

Given at our Castle at Windsor this sixteenth day of February in the year one thousand eight hundred and ninety-nine.

Yours,

ETHEL.

XCV

London,

November 3rd, 1899.

MY DEAREST GRACE,

I must tell you first—I am engaged to be married to Oscar Finnies. You know him and like him. He is, and has been (he says), madly in love with me for years. I do not pretend to feel like that towards him, and he knows it; but he's good and kind and clever, and I shall be happy with him—as happy, I hope, as you and Walter are.

Oscar says he would have proposed a month ago, but that Cyril (Captain Ducie) came to him, said he knew what Oscar was going to do, and begged him, for the sake of the family, to wait a month. Oscar refused, and Ducie stirred up against him all the Finnies, Dawlers, Hoods, Case-Hayleys, and whatsoever other Glastonbury connections there are. There have been family meetings, quarrels, and interminable correspondence. All about me! Oscar's family is divided into parties—those who won't speak and those who will write to him. The month was up yesterday, and Oscar had a holy quarrel with

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Ducie, then coolly came off and proposed to me in the nicest way. That's the best of Oscar—he keeps his head; but he and Cousin Cyril won't speak to each other on this side of the grave. Ducie's always been jealous of Oscar for being nearer the title. It looks a certainty for him now, as the new Earl is seventy-five and a widower s.p. (which doesn't mean starting price).

A curious thing, about three weeks ago Mrs. Gorple, my Castleford landlady, wrote to me and said that inquiries had been made more than once about me. They got nothing out of her. Money was offered. After that she refused to see the enquiry agents. Ducie was at the bottom of that business. It's quite in his character. I hate that man!

I will see you to-morrow. Oscar has called.

Your loving

ETHEL.

XCVI

*Nightingale Place,
November 10th.*

DEAREST GRACE,

We're to be married soon and quietly. Besides my own people, I want you and Walter and 'Stace, and Mr. Jessey, and Lord Henry and his wife, and Mr. and Mrs. Hawood to come. Oscar is arranging about his people.

To-day I've had my first wedding-present. Guess what it is. A theatre! From Mr. Schwartzenhagen! The other day he asked me what I'd like to have above everything else in the world.

"Well," I said, "since you put it in that way, I'd like a nice theatre—not too large—a comedy theatre."

"All right," he said; "I shall remember—a comedy theatre."

Apparently he sent a man down to buy one, and to-day I had the kindest letter from him about the terms of the partnership. He is most liberal.

I shall do 'Stace's piece, "The Princess of

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London," which you and Walter liked so much when he read it to us this summer.

If I can't make a success of the "Princess" I'd better retire, and we can't afford that yet.

The Hon. Mrs. Oscar Lane Percival-Finnies! How will some of my professional colleagues like that? The actual and fateful day will be fixed very soon. Please do not irremediably engage yourself for, say, six weeks hence. Oscar has called.

Yours lovingly, in haste,

ETHEL

XCVII

Sept. 1st, 1900.

DEAR MRS. JERVIS,

Ethel is doing very well. It is a boy, who will certainly be the Earl of Glastonbury whether I am or not. He has Ethel's eyes. She sends her love, and asks me to say that she thinks she has put a spoke in Captain Ducie's wheel this time. You see, she is in good spirits. She is much pleased at Miss Isabel Avondale's success in "The Princess of London," but I know she is longing to get back to the part. But her anxiety in that respect is nothing to Mr. Talbot's! Both will have to be patient. With kindest regards to you and Walter.

Sincerely yours,

OSCAR L. P. FINNIES.

THE END.

